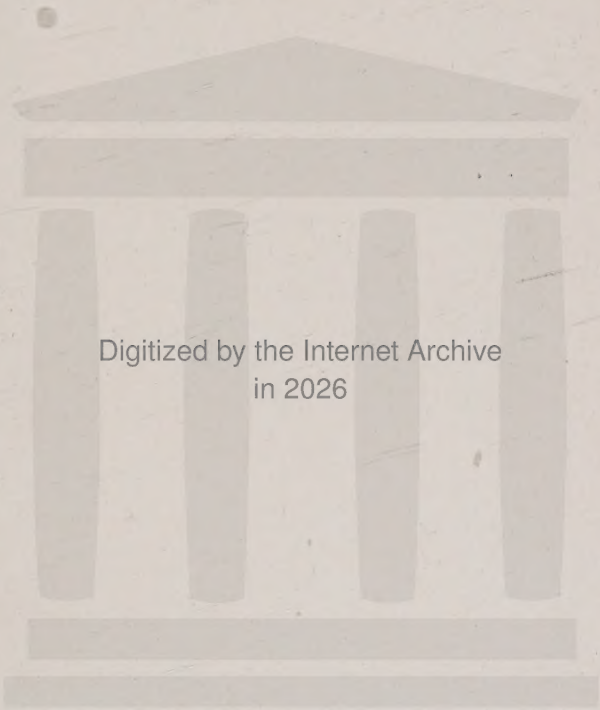
SUNNY BOY IN SCHOOL AND OUT

RAMY ALLISON WHITE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Miss Davis marched them back to their own room.

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SUNNY BOY IN SCHOOL AND OUT

BY

RAMY ALLISON WHITE

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"SUNNY BOY IN THE COUNTRY," "SUNNY BO
AT THE SEASHORE," "SUNNY BOY
IN THE BIG CITY," ETC.

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By RAMY ALLISON WHITE

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SUNNY BOY IN THE COUNTRY
SUNNY BOY AT THE SEASHORE
SUNNY BOY IN THE BIG CITY
SUNNY BOY IN SCHOOL AND OUT

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SUNNY BOY IN SCHOOL AND OUT

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He took off one of his precious boots and put them in that 99

He got along beautifully until he reached the second verse 165

SUNNY BOY IN SCHOOL AND OUT

CHAPTER I

THE TRAFFIC OFFICER

"WHEN I put out my hand like this—you stop," said Sunny Boy, holding out his right hand, palm outward. "Then when I whistle and put my hand out the other way, you can come ahead. Let's go down to the corner and I'll show you."

Obediently the group of children followed him to the corner of the street. Sunny Boy, just home from a visit to the great city of New York, had invented a fascinating new game.

"Now, Ruth and Nelson and Bobbie, you come up Glenn Avenue," he directed.

"And Oliver and David, you come up Salem Street. I'm the traffic p'liceman, an' I stand right here at the corner."

"Wait till I get my horselines," begged David Spellman. "I can play Oliver is my horse and wagon. That's more fun than just people."

He ran down the street to his house, which was not far away, and the others sat down on the curbstone to wait for him.

"Hello, Sunny Boy, back again?" called the postman cheerily, as he crossed the street. "What you playing now?"

"City," explained Sunny Boy briefly. "I'm regulating traffic."

He pronounced the word slowly and carefully, and the postman looked at him with new respect.

"So?" he rejoined with interest. "Common Council was saying we need a traffic cop right here in Centronia. Where's your traffic, Sunny?"

"Ruth's traffic," Sunny Boy informed him. "Ruth and Oliver and Bobbie and David. He's gone to get his lines. You watch, Mr. Harris, and I'll show you how we play."

The postman, who had finished his morning route, good-naturedly promised to watch, and David, having come back with the lines, Sunny Boy assumed his duties immediately.

"Ruth and Nelson and Bobbie are coming one way," he explained to Mr. Harris, "and Oliver and David are on another street. And, if I didn't watch out, they'd bump together at the corner."

The young policeman took a tin whistle from the pocket of his tan blouse and blew a sharp blast. At the same time he held up his hand and frowned severely at Ruth and Nelson and Bobbie who continued to advance serenely.

Toot! Toot! The whistle sounded again.

"You're to stop!" shouted Sunny Boy. "Let David and Oliver cross first. Go on, Oliver, hurry up."

Oliver drove David past the corner in excellent style, and then the whistle blew again and this time Nelson and Ruth and Bobbie were allowed to go ahead and the "horse and wagon" had to wait.

"Fine!" announced Mr. Harris, the postman. "That's great, Sunny. Well, I must be getting on back to the office. See that you don't have any accidents, and be sure you keep order." And swinging his empty mail bag he walked down the street toward the crosstown trolley line that would carry him to the post-office.

"I think, Sunny," said Ruth, a little timidly, for she was only a girl and never was sure when the boys would decide that she couldn't play their games, "I think if

we had some chalk and marked some lines we'd know better when to stop. You can't tell where the end of the street is on the sidewalk."

"Mrs. Ellis will be mad if we mark her pavement all up," protested the cautious David. "My mother says chalk marks are awful hard to get off."

"String will do," decided Sunny Boy. "Let's get some string. And I'll get a soap box, too. The p'liceman in New York stood on a box. That's so he won't get run over."

"You know the post card you sent me?" asked Oliver Dunlap suddenly. "Well, there's a big thing in the middle of the street—like a platform with folks standing on it. What's that for?"

Sunny Boy was puzzled for a moment. Then he recollected.

"The walking people stood on those," he said. "Daddy says they are 'safety

isles.' You wait on 'em, you know, till all the automobiles going one way have stopped. Wouldn't it be fun if we had some of those?"

"Let's," suggested David, his black eyes snapping with excitement. "I'll get my seesaw board. We can rest it on bricks and that will be a safety isle. Only we need more people. Harry Winn is home and Jim Scofield and the two Carr girls—the little one cries if you look at her, but Lottie is all right. You can't play city without a lot of people."

"That's so," agreed Sunny Boy. "All right, you go and get your seesaw board and I'll get a soap box out of our cellar. I guess Harriet won't care. Ruth will ask the rest to come and play, won't you, Ruth?"

Ruth promised, and the traffic scattered to get boxes and boards. The two Carr girls, Ruth reported, were visiting their

aunt for two weeks, but she had found Harry Winn and Jim Scofield at home and they came back with her, eager and curious about this new kind of game.

"We'll play right out in the street!" proposed Sunny Boy, seized with a new idea as he set up his soap box and mounted it to see if it would hold him. "We'll have a safety isle right out in Glenn Avenue. Then we can play the real wagons are ours, too."

Now, Centronia was not a large place, and, in comparison with New York, its streets were quiet; but, though small, it was a thriving inland city, and Glenn Avenue, where Sunny Boy lived, was a much-traveled thoroughfare. It was part of the main road to the state capital, and automobiles in particular were constantly passing over it. If the children had stopped to think, they might have won-

dered whether the middle of such a street was a good place to play.

"I'll help you carry the board," said Sunny Boy, taking one end of the long plank which was part of David's seesaw. "Where'd you get the bricks?"

"I had to borrow those," admitted David. "You know that new house they're building next door to us? They have a whole pile of bricks, and I thought they wouldn't care if I took four. I'll take 'em right back, soon as we're through."

The board, balanced on the four bricks, two at either end, made a very fair safety isle, higher, perhaps, than the ones pictured on the post cards Sunny Boy had sent his friends, but for all that a substantial, businesslike affair.

"Now I put my box in the middle, so," said Sunny Boy, whose cap had fallen off and whose face was streaked with perspiration and dust and beaming with

happiness, "and then we're ready. Look out for that car coming, Ruth."

Ruth stepped up on the safety isle just as a large red motor car whizzed by her. Oliver, coming across from the other side of the avenue, almost walked into the path of a heavy truck coming from the other direction.

"My goodness!" decided Sunny Boy, in some anxiety, "I s'spect I'd better blow my whistle."

He lifted his hand as a signal to David and Oliver, and blew a hearty toot on the tin whistle.

"Come on!" he cried.

Oliver and David started, but half way across they looked up and saw two cars coming, one going south, the second, north. The boys stopped as though rooted to the ground.

"Come on!" shouted Sunny Boy, hop-

ping up and down in excitement. "Don't stand there! Hurry over!"

Oliver and David, however, continued to stand still, and just as the cars reached them the drivers swung them out to the gutter side of the road. They shouted back something the children could not hear.

"Oh, Sunny, here's a running horse!" screamed Ruth Baker, darting out to the soap box and scrambling up beside Sunny Boy. "I'm afraid he'll run over us."

Sunny Boy looked up the avenue and saw a wagon coming rapidly toward them, the horse galloping wildly. Back of the wagon was a crowded motor bus, the driver honking his horn incessantly. From the other direction lumbered a load of hay so broad and sweeping that it threatened to brush Ruth and Sunny from their soap box into the path of the horse.

CHAPTER II

RESCUED

IT is likely those small readers who have not met Sunny Boy before are wondering about his New York visit and especially whether that is his "truly" name. Sunny Boy himself would stoutly insist that it was his real name, but at the same time he would admit he had another and longer one, which, so far, he had seldom needed.

He was, in fact, named for his dear grandfather, "Arthur Bradford Horton," though you could hardly expect any one to call such a small boy by such an impressive name. Sunny Boy suited him very much better. His mother and his daddy and Harriet, with whom he lived,

and Aunt Bessie, who was Mrs. Horton's sister, always said they never knew a little lad who had such good times and who smiled day in and day out. So you see, he had a right to think Sunny Boy was his own name.

If you have read the first book in this series, called "Sunny Boy in the Country," you know about the month Sunny Boy and his mother spent at Brookside, Grandpa Horton's lovely farm, and about the kite he made and what serious trouble came of it, trouble, however, that ended happily. You may remember, too, about the Hatch children who played with Sunny in the barn, and Peter and Paul, the horses, and how Sunny Boy frightened his grandfather by having Peter run away with him. Oh, Brookside was a wonderful place, no mistake about that!

Sunny Boy had almost decided he would be a farmer like Grandpa, when he

was whisked away to the seashore, with Daddy and Mother, to visit his Aunt Bessie. This meant more good times, all told in "Sunny Boy at the Seashore." You will have to read this book to find out what Sunny Boy put in the lunch basket, and about Ralph and Ellen Gray, the children he played with at the beach, and of the jitney ride he took alone. Sunny Boy found two dogs to play with, too, and he was buried in a sand house and learned to swim and really had the busiest and happiest four weeks a boy could possibly dream of.

The third volume of the series, "Sunny Boy in the Big City," tells how Sunny Boy and his daddy and his mother went to New York and of the adventures Sunny Boy found there. He was lost twice, once in the hotel and once in the subway, and he went to Central Park and the Statue of Liberty, and, of course, he saw many,

many traffic policemen. These splendid officers interested Sunny Boy so much that he finally decided he would not be a farmer like Grandpa Horton, or a sailor, like Captain Franklin, who had rescued him when he was nearly lost at sea, as told in "Sunny Boy at the Seashore," but that he would be a traffic policeman and nothing less.

When they came home from New York there were still a few days before the schools opened, and Sunny Boy seized his chance to practice as a police officer. His three long visits had been great fun, but he found that it was also very pleasant to be home again and to play with the boys and girls on his block whom he had always known. He had been home about a week now, and every single day he and his friends had played "City," and so far they had not tired of the game. Until this morning they had played contentedly on

the sidewalk and, as Sunny Boy saw the load of hay approaching nearer and nearer, he began to think that it might have been just as well if they had never gone into the street to play.

"I'm—I'm afraid!" quavered Ruth, pressing closer to Sunny Boy, and nearly pushing him from the box. "Oh, here comes Oliver!"

Sure enough, Oliver, with some vague idea of being helpful, dashed from the safety isle to the soap box just as the swaying wagon and the bus rushed past him.

With three children on the frail little wooden box, and five on the safety isle, no wonder the traffic policeman was bewildered. How could be control or regulate anything, with the "traffic" darting about like frightened chickens and paying absolutely no attention to his orders?

"You'll have to—" Sunny Boy began, meaning to say they would have to stay where they were and wait till some of the automobiles and wagons were gone. But the soap box broke, and he and Ruth and Oliver fell in a little heap.

"In trouble?"

"What in the world are you up to now?"

The first question came from the driver of the hay load who stopped his horses on one side of the broken box, and the second question was asked by a smiling, gray-haired man in a touring car who drew up on the other side of the surprised youngsters.

"Oh, Mr. Gill!" Sunny Boy recognized a friend of his father's. "We're playing city, an' I'm the traffic p'liceman. And the box went and broke, and anyway Ruth's afraid."

The gray-haired man looked across at

the farmer driving the hay wagon, and they both laughed.

"You picked out a bad day to regulate the highway," drawled the farmer. "The State Fair just opened and I'm thinking traffic will be heavy all this week."

"Better stick to the sidewalk, Sunny," advised Mr. Gill kindly. "Who are the kids on the board?"

Sunny Boy explained about the safety isle.

"I didn't think there would be so many things," he said sadly. "I s'pose we'd better play on the pavement."

The load of hay went on, but Mr. Gill and his car stayed until the board and bricks and splintered soap box had been safely carried to the sidewalk and all the children were lined up once more on the curb. Then he drove away.

Before Sunny Boy could reorganize his plans, Harriet came down to the cor-

ner to tell him lunch was ready. And in the afternoon he had to go down town with Mother to buy a new pair of shoes to wear to school.

Sunny Boy had never been to school, though he and Mother had done a little kindergarten work together and Sunny knew many songs and games that children in kindergarten learn. He was most anxious to go to school every day as the older boys did, especially Nelson Baker who was two years older than Sunny and would be eight his next birthday. Nelson went to the public school.

"Is Ruth going to school?" Sunny Boy asked his mother as they waited for the new shoes to be put in a box. "She could go with me."

"Ruth won't go until next year," said Mrs. Horton. "She isn't five yet, you know. When she does start, it will be very nice of you to take care of her."

Sunny Boy had seen the school he was to enter. Harriet and he had passed it one day when they were out trying to recover a hat which a colored boy had stolen from Sunny. This school was in a handsome stone building that had once been a private house. Judge Thomas Ford had lived there, a rather stern looking old gentleman with white whiskers and a deep voice. He was said to be wealthy, and his daughter, Miss May Ford, who kept house for him after his wife's death, had her own carriage and a maid whose sole duty it was to wait on her mistress and see that her pretty dresses were always in order.

"Then Judge Thomas died," Harriet told Sunny Boy, when she heard that he was going to school, "and there was no money at all, nothing for poor Miss May but the house she lived in and some diamonds that were her mother's. She sold

the diamonds and had the house altered so that the first floor could be used for a school. And for two years she has had an assistant and more children than she can find room for."

"Does she cry?" asked Sunny Boy curiously. "Is she sorry?"

Harriet looked at him gravely. She often spoke to him as though he were older, and indeed Sunny Boy understood more than grown-ups always knew.

"Miss May Ford," said Harriet slowly, "is as happy as the day is long. Having to work is the best thing that can happen to anybody in this world, Sunny. The idle people aren't the happy ones."

After this, whenever Sunny Boy and Harriet walked past the stone house and he saw the shining brass plate that read, "Miss May Ford's School for Boys and Girls," Sunny Boy would wonder about Miss May and her father, the judge, and

the diamonds and the carriage that had once been hers.

"So to-morrow's the big day, is it?" asked Mr. Horton at dinner one night a few days after Sunny Boy's new shoes had been bought. "The first day of school, eh, Sunny?"

"Harriet's going to take me," said Sunny Boy eagerly. "But just beginning, Daddy; I can go alone by and by. Mother said so."

"That's fine," returned Mr. Horton heartily. "Do you know, I saw something to-day that I thought a boy who went to school might like. If you care to look in my coat pocket—"

CHAPTER III

MISS MAY'S SCHOOL

WITH a hurried "'Scuse me, Mother," Sunny Boy dashed into the hall. Mr. Horton changed his office coat for one of lighter weight on warm evenings, and Sunny Boy knew he had done so to-night. Centronia was famous for hot weather late in September.

"I've got it!" shouted Sunny Boy, racing back to the dining-room. "Look, Mother, it's a pencil with points!"

Mrs. Horton admired the shining silver pencil with the box of leads and said that Sunny Boy ought to learn to write quickly with such help as that.

"Now I don't care if Nelson has a knife," observed Sunny Boy contentedly,

"and Oliver Dunlap has a machine to sharpen pencils. Wait till I show 'em mine. You don't need either with a pencil like this."

The next morning Sunny Boy and Harriet started for Miss May Ford's school. Mrs. Horton had been to see Miss May the week before and had arranged for Sunny Boy to be registered on the school roll.

Sunny Boy felt in his pocket to make sure the new pencil was safe as he walked along beside Harriet.

"Did you like to go to school, Harriet?" he asked when they had crossed the first corner.

"I guess so," Harriet answered, not very decidedly. "It was so long ago, Sunny, that I declare I don't remember much about it. But we had no schools like yours. When you started in school

you went from nine till four, whether you were six or sixteen."

"Did you know the boys and girls?" urged Sunny Boy, whose mind was on the experiences that might be ahead of him.

"Yes. And so will you," replied Harriet reassuringly. "There'll be ever so many children you know. Those on our block that don't go to the public school go to Miss May's, you'll find. And, as she doesn't teach higher than the second grade, none of 'em will be much older than you."

Two more blocks and they came in sight of the stone house that was the school. Harriet immediately became anxious about Sunny Boy's appearance, asking to be shown his handkerchief that she might be sure it was clean, and tilting up his chin so that she could see if his face was spotless. She straightened his

tie and pulled his hat a little further down on his forehead.

"You behave as well as you look," said Harriet, when she had done all this, "and you'll do."

That was as near praise as Harriet ever came. She had lived with Sunny Boy's mother ever since he was born and loved them both dearly.

The queerest pricking feeling started in Sunny Boy's new shoes as they went up the stone steps, and by the time Harriet had rung the shining bell, the pricking had reached his ears. He was quite uncomfortable and he didn't know what ailed him. Two little girls and a boy were already waiting on the steps. They looked solemnly at Sunny and did not smile. He perceived that this going to school was a serious business.

A pretty young woman in a white apron and cap came to the door. The

three other children, evidently old pupils, went quickly in and disappeared down the long hall.

"This is Sunny Boy. Miss Ford knows about him," said Harriet to the maid.

Then she kissed Sunny Boy and went down the steps.

Sunny Boy found himself in the hall with the door closed. He had supposed that Harriet would stay with him longer, and for a moment he felt deserted. The maid disappeared and he was left alone. From the two rooms that opened on the hall came the noise of children's voices and bursts of laughter.

"Well, Sunny Boy, I suppose you think we are not very polite," said a low, sweet voice behind him. "I was busy when you came, dear, but I am so glad you are to be one of my boys."

Sunny Boy turned quickly. A lady stood smiling down at him, a lady who in

spite of her snow-white hair seemed as young as his mother. She wore a pretty gray frock and a string of blue beads that matched her eyes. Sunny Boy thought she was lovely.

"I am Miss Ford," the white-haired lady continued, "but all my children call me Miss May, and I hope you will, too. Come into my room while I finish a report I'm filling out, and then I will take you to Miss Davis."

If Sunny Boy had not had hold of Miss May's hand as they entered the sunny, bay-windowed room she called hers, it is certain that he would have felt shy with so many boys and girls turning to look at him. He saw no one he knew, but Miss May kept one arm around him while she finished writing at her desk, which was on a little platform, and gradually Sunny Boy found that he could examine the room without blushing vio-

lently every time he thought some one looked at him.

It was not at all like the school room Nelson had described to him. This room, to be sure, had desks, but the lids raised up, and Nelson's did not. Instead of benches, there was a chair for each child, and the broad window seats were filled with aquariums and boxes of green vines and flowers. In one window a wooden cage hung with a bright scarlet bird in it who uttered an odd, harsh croak whenever any one laughed or made more noise than usual.

Presently Miss May laid aside her pen and announced that she and Sunny Boy would go and see Miss Davis.

"She is to be your teacher," she explained, as they went across the hall. "She has the reception grades and I teach the first and second. Miss Davis, this is Arthur Bradford Horton, whom we're

going to call Sunny Boy, however, because he is more used to that name and I think we shall like it better, too."

Miss Davis shook hands pleasantly with Sunny. She was a little, roly-poly kind of woman with twinkling dark eyes and dark hair, and she wore a white blouse and scarlet tie that was scarcely redder than her cheeks. When she smiled Sunny Boy saw that her teeth were very even and white. He liked her right away and she evidently was glad to know him.

"Carleton will show you where to put your hat," she said, as Miss May went back to her own room. "Can you print? I thought you could. Well, to-morrow we will print labels for the hooks and you can mark yours so that you will always know it."

Carleton Marsh came forward when Miss Davis called him and Sunny Boy found that he knew him. He lived in a

house on the street next to Glenn Avenue, and Sunny Boy had often met him in the grocery store when he went on errands with Harriet. But he had not known his name.

As Harriet had said, there were other boys and girls there whom he did know, names and all. There was Dorothy Peters, and Helen Graham, and the two Carr girls, the one who cried and the one who didn't, and Perry Phelps, and Bobbie Henderson, and Leslie Bradin, and others, too, some of whom he knew by sight only.

"Here's your peg," said Carleton hospitably, showing Sunny Boy a hook placed conveniently low down on the wall in a large, light closet that opened into the school room. "The top spike is for your hat, and the other one is for your coat when you wear one in winter. Here, you don't go out that way."

Sunny Boy had grasped the handle of a door that certainly looked like the one he had just come through.

"Where's that go?" he asked curiously.

Carleton walked over to him and put his mouth close to Sunny Boy's ear.

"That's a dark closet," he whispered. "Miss Davis puts you in there if you're bad. She shut me up there once. You have to say you're sorry before she lets you out."

CHAPTER IV

HIS FIRST DAY

SUNNY BOY hastily resolved to be very good indeed. He went back to Miss Davis's room with Carleton and when the clock struck nine they all marched across the room and sat with Miss May's pupils while she read a Psalm and Miss Davis played on the piano for them to sing. Sunny Boy enjoyed this. They sang a hymn he knew by heart and he was able to pass his book to another boy who had none and who did not know the words.

After the singing, Miss Davis marched her class back to their own room, and the big folding doors were closed.

"We're going to spend to-day getting

acquainted," said Miss Davis, smiling so irresistibly that the thirty serious little faces confronting her relaxed and smiled back. "Getting acquainted, and finding out what we can do. Of all you children, only ten have been to school before. That means twenty will find it all new. No one should feel shy or backward about asking questions or help when he knows he is only one of twenty who feel the same way. Don't be afraid to ask all the questions you wish. Teachers are made to answer questions."

Sunny Boy learned that the first thing one does on a school morning is to answer the roll. Miss Davis had a list of names on the desk before her, and she read these aloud. Each child, as his name was called, answered "Here." Sunny Boy wondered what happened when he wasn't there to answer to his name, but Carleton explained to him

after school that if you didn't say "Here" you were marked "Absent" and your mother had to write a note and say why you had stayed at home.

After roll call, Miss Davis announced that the sand table had been filled with fresh sand, but that the man who had filled it had mixed her ocean city hopelessly.

"I have a boardwalk and an ocean and tents and lights," she said sadly, "but they are all tossed together in this box. I wonder if Sunny Boy and Helen Graham couldn't sort them out for me and make another ocean city?"

Helen looked doubtful, but Sunny Boy was sure he could do it. Hadn't he spent a month at the seashore, visiting his Aunt Bessie, and didn't he know how a seashore town should look? So Miss Davis gave him the box and told him to help Helen, and said that they mustn't whisper

any more than they could help and to be careful about spilling sand on the floor.

While the ocean city was being built, Miss Davis asked Perry Phelps to distribute large squares of pink paper on each desk, and then Dorothy Peters laid a pair of blunt scissors on top of each paper. Miss Davis showed them how to measure, and how to make slits in the paper at even distances apart, and then another boy handed around narrow strips of blue paper and the whole class fell to weaving. Sunny Boy, laying the cunning boardwalk, decided that there were a great many interesting things to do in school.

"That's a better city than I had last year!" cried Miss Davis, when she came over to inspect the work at the sand table. "How well you've done it, Helen and Sunny. Now come back to your

seats, because we're going to play a game."

"What kind of a game?" asked Bobbie Henderson.

"You may choose, Bobbie," said Miss Davis kindly. "What do you want to play?"

"Leap frog," chose Bobbie.

"That's an outdoor game," Miss Davis reminded him. "We're not going out on the play ground this morning. Choose something we can play inside, Bobbie."

But Bobbie stubbornly refused a second choice, and finally Lottie Carr suggested that they play "the bird game."

There was a piano in one corner of the room, and Miss Davis sat down before it, motioning the children to gather around her.

Lottie wanted to be a robin. Perry Phelps said he was a bluebird, and Helen

Graham declared she was a lark. Carleton Marsh selected the crow—he said he liked that bird because it didn't try to sing. One by one, each child selected the name of a bird, and Sunny Boy, when his turn came, said he would be a canary. He was very fond of the dainty yellow and white bird that sang for them every morning at home.

"Now I'll explain the game to those who do not know it," said Miss Davis briskly, when every one had decided what kind of bird he would be. "I'm supposed to be the Forest Fairy, and my magic music summons the birds. When I call, 'Robin,' the robin flies up to the piano and trills a little song and then flies away. When I call, 'Thrush,' that bird comes flying for his song. You don't know whom I am going to call on, so you have to listen very attentively. Here's the magic music—listen."

Under Miss Davis's clever fingers, the music came trickling merrily, now fast, now slow. Sunny Boy was watching her hands so intently that when she called "Wren" he almost jumped. The little girl who had chosen to be the wren fluttered down from the bookcase—Miss Davis had allowed the birds to perch wherever they would, and indeed this was part of the fun—and came running over to the piano. Miss Davis had the book open at the wren song, and the little girl sang her verse and then flew back to the bookcase.

"Robin!" called Miss Davis, and Lottie Carr flew down from the edge of the sand table.

When "Canary" was called, Sunny Boy was surprised to find that he wasn't a bit bashful. He flew over to the piano and sang his verse in the clearest little voice imaginable. Perhaps you would like to

know what he sang—his mother and Harriet wanted to hear his song when he told them about the game.

This was the verse for the "Canary" to sing:

"Every day I'm singing,
No day is too long,
Golden are my feathers,
Golden is my song."

Harriet thought that was a very pretty song, and Sunny Boy thought so, too.

When it came Carleton's turn, how the children laughed. There were only two lines to his verse, and he sang them in a harsh, deep, growling voice that really wasn't singing at all. That Carleton insisted, was the way a crow sounded.

This was what the crow said:

"I've a frog in my throat,
And I can't sing a note."

By the time the bird game was finished, Miss Davis said the clock said quarter of twelve, and there would be just time for her to read them a story before the bell rang at quarter after twelve. They were tired from so much flying and singing, and were glad to settle down at the desks and listen to a story about a little boy who lived in Alaska and went fishing for salmon. It was an interesting story, and when the bell rang as Miss Davis was in the middle of a chapter, no one wanted her to stop. But she promised to read to them again the next day.

You may imagine that Sunny Boy had a great deal to tell his mother that afternoon. Miss May's school had no afternoon sessions and after quarter after twelve the children were free till the next morning. That was because they were none of them older than eight.

Harriet, who came after Sunny Boy,

was so interested in hearing about his first morning that she forgot to hurry and only as they neared the house remembered that she had left something important in the oven. She ran in to get it out before it should be burned, and Sunny Boy went upstairs to find his mother.

"Well, precious, how do you like school?" she asked, hugging him. "Were you homesick, and did the time seem long?"

"It's lots of fun," Sunny Boy assured her, beaming. "I fixed the sand table, Mother. And I sang a canary song. And Miss Davis is reading to us about a boy in Alaska. I like school ever so much."

"I guess you had no time to be homesick," said Mrs. Horton, smiling. "I missed you so, Sunny. This has been the longest morning."

Sunny Boy was puzzled. The time

had gone very quickly for him. He couldn't understand that mothers miss their little boys when they go to school for the first time.

"There's a dark closet, where Miss Davis puts you when you're bad," he remarked, wisely deciding that he must make up to his mother for his absence by telling her all the interesting things he could remember. "I hope she doesn't put me in it."

"Then you'll have to be good so she won't," rejoined Mrs. Horton. "Come down to lunch now, dear. You can tell me more about it at the table."

CHAPTER V

JESSIE SMILEY

FOR three mornings Harriet took Sunny Boy to school and brought him home, and then, yielding to his teasing, Mrs. Horton said he might go alone, if he would promise to be careful about the crossings. It happened that none of the other children who went to Miss May's lived very near Sunny so he could not have companions for his walk.

The night before he was to start off by himself, Sunny Boy went up to his playroom after supper to look at his toys. He would not have owned it for the world, but now that he knew he was to be allowed to go to school alone he felt a little frightened. Or not exactly fright-

ened, perhaps, but a bit uncertain. Harriet was a very comforting person, he reflected, and he liked to come out into the hall at noon and find her waiting for him.

"Yesterday morning was kind of long," Sunny Boy admitted to himself, winding up the tin automobile that ran around and around. "I wish Harriet wouldn't take me, but just go some of the way."

However, he knew that Harriet had planned to do some special work in the morning. "Indeed, now that you're a big boy and going to school by yourself 'tis a lot of ironing I'll get done," she had told him, so he would be expected to go quite alone.

"I'll take the camel with me," Sunny Boy decided, just as Daddy called to him that it was bedtime. "The camel and the swimming duck, and my second-best rubber ball. They'll all go in my pockets."

He thought they would be a great help to him in case he was lonesome.

He was up earlier than usual the next morning and, as it happened, he and Daddy had breakfast without Mother, for she had a sick headache and did not feel like coming down. Daddy went off to business first, and when Sunny Boy tiptoed into Mrs. Horton's room to kiss her good-bye the shades were drawn and it was too dark for her to see that his pockets bulged with queer lumps.

Harriet, too, was busy, eager to get at her ironing, so no one noticed that Sunny's blue suit did not look at all like its usual trim outline.

"I came by myself!" Sunny Boy announced proudly to Miss Davis, whom he met on the school steps, just going in.

Once in the school room, Sunny Boy pulled, with some difficulty, his favorite shaggy brown camel from his blouse,

took the red rubber ball from one pocket and the duck from the other, and arranged all three toys in an orderly row on top of his desk.

"What you doing?" asked an inquisitive little black-eyed girl whom the other children called "Jessie."

"Oh—nothing," answered Sunny Boy carelessly.

He wished she would go away, but she persisted in staring at him until the bell rang for them to march into Miss May's room. He couldn't put it into words for this curious little maiden that his familiar toys were a comfort to him where everything else was strange, but he thought resentfully that she should know without telling. Jessie had been to school before.

Miss Davis was just taking her seat, after her class returned from the morning exercises, when a loud squeak sounded

in the room. Every one turned, then giggled.

"What was that?" asked Miss Davis in surprise.

Sunny Boy's face was scarlet. Jessie, in passing his desk on her way to her own, had leaned over and given the camel a sharp squeeze with her mischievous little fingers.

"Sunny Boy, have you something that makes a noise like that?" Miss Davis said pleasantly.

"It's my camel," the mortified Sunny explained. "Only—but—" his voice trailed off.

He glanced over at Jessie. He had been taught not to tell tales, especially on a girl. Jessie was coolly arranging her colored crayons and had apparently forgotten there were any camels in the world.

Miss Davis rose and came down the

aisle to Sunny Boy's desk. At the sight of the toys she smiled a little.

"Try not to play with them while we are busy," was all she said. "And don't let the camel squeak, because his voice is really very loud."

They had a drawing lesson that morning, and Sunny Boy soon forgot his trouble in trying to draw a really handsome letter "A." If it was a very good "A," Miss Davis promised him, he could color it with crayons and take it home with him. He was just finishing his letter, and bending low over his desk, his tongue in his cheek, his pencil gripped tightly in moist, warm fingers, when "Squeak!" the voice of the camel sounded again. Jessie on her way to the blackboard had been unable to resist the temptation.

But she was not to get off so easily this time. Miss Davis had happened to be watching.

Jessie had not been able to resist the temptation.

"Jessie Smiley!" she said severely. "I'm ashamed of you. I was watching and I saw you squeeze that camel. Did you do it the first time?"

Jessie hung her head and did not want to answer.

"Did you?" insisted Miss Davis. "Yes, I see you did. And you were willing to let Sunny take the blame. Come up here and put that crayon away in the box—you can not color the blackboard drawing this morning. You will have to go and sit in the window seat until I have time to talk to you."

When the children did anything they should not do, they had to go and sit all alone in the window seat. They could not take part in any of the games or the work of the class. They could only watch until Miss Davis decided they had been punished enough.

"Helen and Perry may color the pic-

ture," said Miss Davis, when Jessie had put her crayon away and walked over to the window seat.

This coloring the blackboard picture was a coveted honor. Every afternoon, after the children had gone home, Miss Davis drew a picture on the blackboard and they did not know what it would be until they came the next morning and saw it. That was one reason they were always anxious to get to school —so that they could see the picture. Miss Davis was a clever artist and she drew pictures for Miss May's room, too.

Miss Davis wrote words on her pictures that told the pupils how they were to be colored. Of course the very little children could not always read, but sometimes Miss Davis helped them guess, or they could tell by the picture what they were supposed to do. For instance, if they saw a tree covered with leaves, and

a word written on the leaves, they knew it was probably "green" and they would select the green chalk. They learned the various colors and they learned how to read, all the while they were coloring pictures. But they thought they were just having a good time.

"Wait a minute, Sunny Boy," said Miss Davis, when quarter past twelve came, and Sunny, feeling very important, was stuffing his blouse with his toys ready to go home. His letter "A" he carried carefully in his hand. "I think Jessie has something to tell you."

Jessie had been very lonely in the window seat all the morning. Miss Davis had sat down and talked to her in a low voice while the other children were busy at the sand table, but she had not come back to her desk. Now, at a nod from Miss Davis, she came slowly up to Sunny Boy and faltered shamefacedly that she

was sorry she had let the room think he squeezed the camel.

"Oh, that's all right," Sunny Boy assured her cheerfully, hoping she wasn't going to cry. "I *have* made him squeak, you know, lots of times."

When Sunny Boy reached home Harriet had made pop-overs for luncheon and she and his mother were so glad to see him you might have thought he had been away a week.

"I've a surprise for you," Mrs. Horton announced mysteriously. "You can't guess what it is, and you are not to see it until after lunch."

"Shall I like it?" asked Sunny Boy half-absently, his eyes fixed on his beautiful letter "A" which Mother had propped up on the table so they could both admire it as they ate and Harriet could see it every time she came into the dining room.

"Of course you'll like it, precious!

Daddy had it made for me, and your part will be to bring me things to go on it." And Mrs. Horton smiled at Sunny Boy, who looked more and more puzzled.

"Daddy and you and me," he counted on his fingers. "Is it something we all use, Mother?"

"Eat your pudding, and then come up in my room, and you'll see," was all Mrs. Horton would say. "Why, dearest, what is that in your blouse?"

It was the camel, which Sunny Boy had altogether forgotten.

CHAPTER VI

LATE FOR SCHOOL

SUNNY BOY told his mother about Jessie Smiley as they went upstairs after luncheon, and Mrs. Horton said she thought that perhaps the camel had better stay at home after this. Sunny Boy thought so, too.

"Is that the surprise?" he asked, following his mother into her room. "What is it, Mother? What's it for?"

"Can't you guess?" teased Mrs. Horton. "What does it look like, dear?"

"It looks something like a blackboard," said Sunny Boy cautiously. "Only it's green. And you wouldn't want a blackboard in your room, would you, Mother?"

The "surprise" was a large, square board covered with soft green burlap, and hung like a picture between two windows, just over Mrs. Horton's pretty sewing table. It was low, much lower than the pictures in the room, and Sunny Boy could reach the top by standing on his tiptoes.

"I'll have to explain to you," Mrs. Horton said, when she saw that he had puzzled long enough. "I wanted a board like this to hang your school work on, precious. When you bring home something very, very well done, like this letter 'A,' we'll fasten it up with thumb tacks, and it can stay up a week. You may come in and see it as often as you like, and you'll keep trying harder and harder to do good work so that I shall always have something nice on my board to look at. Do you like it?"

Sunny Boy did like it, very much in-

deed. He ran and found the thumb tacks in Mother's desk as she told him and fastened his letter "A" in place that minute. It was colored a soft red on gray paper, and it looked beautiful against the green of the burlap. Sunny Boy resolved always to do his best so that there should always be something good to put on the board. Miss Davis allowed them to bring home only their best efforts.

Every one in the house soon learned to be interested in the burlap board, and whenever Daddy came home at night one of his first questions was if there was anything new to see. Aunt Bessie, too, formed the habit of running upstairs to look at the papers tacked up, and soon Sunny Boy was proud of his collection.

Soon Sunny Boy was so used to going to school alone that he almost forgot Harriet had ever gone with him. He had

been going about two weeks when something happened that made him late.

It happened this way:

Sunny Boy was marching briskly along to school Wednesday morning, trying to whistle as the grocery boy did, and not succeeding very well, when, at the busiest corner of the busiest street he had to cross, he found an old lady with four or five large bundles, a suitcase, and a poll-parrot in a brass cage. She looked worried and anxious, and no wonder.

"I could help you?" said Sunny Boy shyly, making a question of his offer, for really he was not sure that he could help, there were so many bundles.

"Bless your heart, child, do you think you could help me?" said the old lady doubtfully. "I b'lieve you could. Not to carry, 'cause they're all too heavy for you, but you could sit here and watch that nobody took anything while I go back

and forth. Will you sit on this suitcase for a bit?"

Sunny Boy wanted to remind her that he was on his way to school and had not much time, but he thought perhaps that would not be polite, so he sat down on the suitcase and waited patiently.

The old lady was apparently moving into a dingy red brick house on the other side of the street, and doing her moving all by herself. She was very stout and short of breath and moved slowly. Every time she crossed the street with a bundle and disappeared into the dark doorway of the house Sunny Boy was sure she was never coming back. But she always did, though by the time she had carried everything across and had thanked Sunny Boy warmly, he knew he was late for school.

"Here's a quarter for you," she said kindly, when there was nothing left to carry but the suitcase on which Sunny

Boy had sat. "I'm sure I don't know what I should have done without you. Nowadays every one is too busy to give a body a bit of help."

Sunny Boy thanked her, but said that his mother wouldn't want him to take money for such help, so the old lady felt in her bag and found a bar of chocolate which she gave him instead, and Sunny Boy ran every step of the way to Miss May's school.

"Oh, gee!" he murmured as he saw there were no children going up the stone steps. "I'll bet I'm late!"

He wanted to go home. You know, if you have been late to school, that it isn't the easiest thing in the world to go in after the other children have assembled. In spite of all the teacher says, they *will* turn and stare at you, and if your teacher is nice she looks so sorry to think you are late, and if she is cross, she scolds. Sunny

Boy knew in his heart of hearts it would be much easier for him to go home and come to school the next day on time.

"But that's kind of 'fraidy," he told himself resolutely. "I'm going on in. Miss Davis can't do anything but scold."

He was so late that the class had returned from Miss May's room, and as he entered the door every single one of those children twisted around in their seats to see who was coming late. Of course that was not polite, and Miss Davis said she was sorry none of them could remember what she had told them about being polite.

"I've called the roll, Sunny Boy," she said regretfully, "and you're marked 'absent.' Now I'm afraid I will have to put a black mark down to show that you are tardy. What made you late, dear?"

Sunny Boy told about the old lady, and Miss Davis said that he was very good to

help her but that the next time it would be better to explain that he was going to school and then whoever he was helping would be glad to hurry.

That Wednesday was rather an unlucky day all around. First, of course, Sunny Boy was tardy. Then Helen Graham dropped the box of new crayons and broke most of them into little pieces. You know small pieces of crayon are not nearly so nice to handle as the longer ones. Perry Phelps put too much water in the sand box and it leaked and they had to get a mop from the maid in the white cap and apron, and mop the floor. Dear me, every one seemed to get into trouble that morning.

But Bobbie Henderson had the worst time. He was not interested in the weaving lesson and he spoiled two mats because he didn't listen when Miss Davis was telling the class what to do.

After the weaving, Lottie Carr went around with the box to collect the blunt-pointed scissors, and Bobbie refused to give his up. He said he had not finished using them.

"Come, Bobbie, put your scissors away with the others," urged Miss Davis. "You may go on with your mat to-morrow."

Bobbie still clung to his scissors, and Lottie, who was rather quick-tempered, tried to take them from him and the whole box of scissors was sent clattering to the floor.

"Pick them up, Bobbie, and put yours with them," said Miss Davis quietly.

Bobbie scowled.

"I won't," he muttered.

He was rather frightened after he had said it, and as for the rest of the class, they were so amazed they hardly breathed.

The teacher came down the aisle slowly until she stood by Bobbie's desk.

"Boys who speak like that can not stay in my room," she said very quietly. "You must pick up the scissors, Bobbie."

Bobbie Henderson slouched down into his seat and set his lips obstinately. Miss Davis waited a moment and then, when she saw that he did not intend to obey her, with a quick movement of her arms she lifted him from his seat and carried him, kicking and struggling, into the cloak room, closing the door behind her.

"She's going to shut him in the closet," whispered Carleton Marsh. "He'll have to stay there till he's good."

CHAPTER VII

THE STRANGE DOG

WHEN Miss Davis came back into the room she said nothing about Bobbie, but asked the class to come to attention and asked Sunny Boy what game he would like to play.

"Leave the scissors right there, Lottie," the teacher said, when Lottie Carr would have put them into the box.

All through the travel game which they played at Sunny's suggestion, they could hear Bobbie kicking against the closet door and screaming with rage. He had evidently made up his mind to be very bad indeed.

Miss Davis paid no attention to his noise and the travel game was so inter-

esting that after a while the other children never even heard Bobbie banging against the door. They had finished their game and gone back to their seats and Miss Davis was reading a story aloud to them when Bobbie rattled the handle of the closet door and roared loudly, "I'll be good!"

Miss Davis closed her book.

"You may get out the letters you were working on this morning," she directed the class, "and see if you can make them again and better. I don't want to see a single child stop work to stare at Bobbie; he has been naughty and now he is sorry and no one is to remind him in any way of what has passed. Any one who stops work to stare at Bobbie will have to go in the closet himself to help him to remember."

So every one of the children was working like a little beaver at the papers on the

desks when Bobbie came back into the room. His face was streaked and dirty from crying and he looked very much ashamed of himself. He walked directly to his desk and got down on his hands and knees and gathered up the scissors, putting them in the box with the points all the same way as he had been taught. Then he went up to Lottie Carr and gave her the box. Miss Davis had evidently told him what he must do.

"Put the scissors away in the cupboard, Lottie," said Miss Davis.

Then she opened her book and went on reading the story as though nothing had happened.

The next day was as delightful and calm as Wednesday had been stormy. They played the bird game and this time Sunny Boy was a linnet and had an entirely new verse to sing. Sunny Boy sang

it that night for Daddy. It went like this:

"The linnet loves cherries,
Ripe cherries best,
And so in the orchard
She builds her a nest."

It was perhaps a week after this that Sunny Boy came home from school with such an exciting story to tell that at first Mother could hardly understand him. He talked so fast the words mixed themselves up.

Miss Davis's pupils were working at the sand table, and Sunny Boy had just finished a beautiful safety isle to go in the roadway, when some one across the hall, in Miss May's room, screamed.

Miss Davis heard it, and Miss May heard it. It was one of the little girls who had cried out and almost as soon as she screamed the pretty maid in the white

cap and apron ran through the hall shrieking.

"Don't be frightened," said Miss Davis as some of the children clung to her. "We're perfectly safe in here, whatever it is. Let go my dress, Helen, dear, until I can find out what is in the hall."

Helen Graham only clutched Miss Davis's skirts tighter, so the teacher had to half drag half carry her across the room with her. As she reached the door that opened into the hall—the house was so warm they had not closed it that morning—a great, shaggy dog burst through, a tin can tied to his tail and rattling at every step.

He was a huge animal, standing higher than the desks, and his eyes looked wild and bloodshot. Probably he had been chased through the streets until he was so bewildered he ran into the first open doorway he could find.

"Don't touch him!" warned Miss Davis. "Poor creature, he doesn't know friends from enemies, any more."

The dog growled suddenly, and Perry Phelps, who was near the door, backed away from him.

"Miss Davis!" Miss May came to the door and looked in anxiously. "You don't think he is mad, do you? And how could he get in? And what are we going to do?"

Miss May's class crowded around her and they all stared at the dog that was sniffing around Miss Davis's desk.

"I don't know whether he is mad or not," said Miss Davis decidedly. "But I do know he has been ill-treated and is probably half dead from thirst. If you will take the children into your room, I'll try to drive him into the cloak room. We can shut him in there and get him some water and then telephone to the police."

Miss May did not want to leave Miss Davis alone with the strange dog, but she knew some one had to stay with the children. The pretty maid was laughing and crying upstairs and could not help any one, and one of Miss May's little girls was shrieking from fright, and goodness only knew what would happen if she tried to help Miss Davis and left the boys and girls to take care of themselves.

"I want every child to come into my room," said Miss May firmly, when she had all this thought out. "Miss Davis will try to get the dog where he will be safe, and you can help her best by keeping out of her way. Come now, every one of you—march!"

She held the door open as they scuttled through, and then, with a word of encouragement to Miss Davis, followed the children, closing the door as she went.

Without warning, the dog began to go

around and around the room, the tin can banging against the desks and seats.

"My goodness," said Miss Davis aloud, "perhaps he is mad!"

"I guess he's only mad at the folks that chased him," observed a clear little voice wisely.

It was Sunny Boy. He had not followed the other children into Miss May's room. Instead he had hidden under his teacher's desk. He loved Miss Davis dearly and he did not like to leave her alone in the room with the cross dog. So he had stayed.

"Why, Sunny Boy, you shouldn't be here," Miss Davis cried, but she did not seem to be displeased. "I'll manage the dog some way, and you ought to have gone with the other children."

"I can open the door into the cloak room while you drive him in," Sunny

Boy suggested. "Then I could shut it—quick!"

"That's a very good plan," answered Miss Davis approvingly. "That's just what we'll do. Stand back of the door, dear, so he won't see you, and when I call 'Now!' bang the door with all your might."

The dog did not want to go into the cloak room at all, and Miss Davis had to chase him around the room several times before she could head him in the right direction. Suddenly Sunny Boy heard her say "Now!" and he banged the door shut with all his strength. Indeed he jarred two pictures from the wall, but no one cared about them.

"Why, Sunny Boy!" was Miss May's greeting to him when, with Miss Davis, he went into her room. "Where have you been? I had just missed you, and was terribly worried."

"He helped me get the dog," explained Miss Davis proudly, and then she told them what a help Sunny Boy had been.

"Can we give him a drink?" several of the boys urged, feeling sorry for the poor animal now that he could no longer possibly hurt them.

"I must telephone first," answered Miss May, going into the hall where the telephone stand was.

She called the police department and a doctor for the pretty maid who was really ill from fright; she had been cleaning the name-plate of the school when the dog had dashed in behind her.

Two tall policemen came presently with a wagon and a long rope, but before they rang the bell Miss Davis had given the dog a dish of water and reported that he had lapped it up greedily.

"This here dog," said the taller policeman, who was very brave and strong but

who had never gone to school very much and so shouldn't be expected always to speak correctly, "this here dog belongs to a good-for-nothing boy they call Waddy Lutz. He's been warned time and again to keep the critter tied up. Where is he?"

The policeman meant the dog, not Waddy Lutz. Miss Davis took them to the cloak room, and in a few minutes they returned leading the dog by the rope which they had knotted about his neck.

"That Lutz fellow will never see this cur again," said the other policeman darkly. "The Chief's patience has about run out."

The children watched them lift the dog into the wagon and drive away.

CHAPTER VIII

WADDY LUTZ

THE doctor came and went upstairs. Miss May said that there would be no more school that morning, and indeed every one was so upset it is doubtful if they could have settled down to any kind of work.

Oliver Dunlap walked part of the way home with Sunny Boy.

"Just think, that Waddy Lutz won't ever see his dog again," said Oliver solemnly. "What do you suppose they will do with it?"

"Maybe the Chief will keep it," answered Sunny Boy hopefully. "I guess it is a nice dog when it isn't mad. I wouldn't mind having him for my dog,

only I have a puppy up at Grandpa Horton's, and Waddy's dog wouldn't like to play with him—he's too little."

The next day when Sunny Boy was walking home from school a short, thick-set boy, apparently about sixteen years old, spoke to him. The boy wore a dirty old cap pulled down over his eyes and his clothes were patched in many places and not very clean. He was chewing on a broom straw and he never took it out of his mouth even when he talked.

"Look here a minute," said this boy, who stood leaning against an electric light pole. "Aren't you one of the kids that goes to that fal-de-rol school on the next block?"

Sunny Boy did not know what kind of school a fal-de-rol school was, but he understood that the boy meant Miss May's.

"Yes, I go there," he replied pleasantly.

"I'm in the lower reception grade. This is my first term."

"Didn't see anything of a dog around there yesterday, did you?" asked the boy carelessly. "A big dog, with kind of reddish hair?"

Sunny Boy was immediately excited.

"Are you Waddy Lutz?" he demanded. "Was that your dog? Who tied the can to his tail?"

"Never you mind who I am," retorted the boy darkly. "What I want is my dog. What did they do with him?"

"Two policemen took him away in a wagon," said Sunny Boy. "You'll never see him again."

This remark of the policeman's had made such a deep impression on Sunny Boy that he repeated it without thinking and was much alarmed when the boy grasped him fiercely by the elbow.

"I won't, won't I?" hissed this unpleas-

ant person. "Who says so? Let me tell you, if any one has done away with my dog they'll be sorry. There can't no school-teacher kill my dog and get away with it."

"I think, perhaps," said Sunny Boy conciliatingly, "the Chief has your dog. Maybe he likes pets."

The boy muttered something and slouched away, leaving Sunny Boy staring after him.

"Sunny Boy, will you go to the door?" asked Miss Davis a morning or two later when the bell rang just as she was distributing pencils and papers to her class.

Miss May's school, you know, was not like a regular school, where all visitors are shown directly to the principal's office and where bells ring all day long to tell the pupils what to do. Miss May did not believe that very small people should have too many rules to follow, so

her school was more like a private house. Whenever, as this morning, the doorbell rang and the maid was busy and Miss May and Miss Davis were also busy, one of the children often answered the door. They could receive visitors nicely and knew how to ask them to wait in the reception hall until Miss May could come to them.

Sunny Boy hurried to the door and when he opened it, there stood the disagreeable boy who had spoken to him about the dog.

"Hello!" said Sunny Boy uncertainly.

"Hello yourself!" replied the boy rudely. "Where's the school teacher?"

"Do you mean Miss May?" asked Sunny Boy. "She's busy."

"Then I'll wait," grinned the boy impudently, seating himself on a pretty inlaid table that stood in the hall.

Sunny Boy stood undecided for a mo-

ment. He had never seen a caller who sat on tables.

"Who—whom shall I say wishes to see her?" he asked with pretty courtesy.

"Huh?" the boy glanced at him suspiciously. "Don't you try to put on airs, young 'un. You tell that school teacher of yours I want to see her on important business. Never mind my name."

"What is it, Sunny?" asked Miss May's sweet, low voice, and she came up to them, smiling.

The strange boy was astonished to find himself sliding down from the table. He had not meant to get off in the least, and certainly Miss May had not asked him to.

"I'm after my dog, ma'am," said the boy. "I heard he was around here the other day."

Miss May explained how the dog had entered the school, and all the trouble and excitement his visit had caused.

"I had to telephone for the police," she said, "and they came and took him away. I should say he was a very dangerous dog to leave untied; he is so large that he might do serious harm if he were aroused. Besides, he frightens people."

"I ain't a-going away till I get my dog," insisted Waddy Lutz, for though he would not tell his name, Miss May and Sunny Boy were convinced he was Waddy. "I'll sit right here till you give me back my dog. You can't go taking people's property away from 'em. Not in this country you can't."

He looked ugly and obstinate and Sunny Boy did not see what Miss May could do with him. But she knew.

"If you do not go away quietly and at once," she said firmly, "I will telephone the police. They know you. And if you are anxious about the fate of your dog, I advise you to go to police headquarters."

Waddy Lutz turned toward the door.

"I'm a-going," he said sullenly. "But don't you worry—I'll get even with you yet, school-teacher. All my life I've been put upon, and I ain't a-going to stand it forever. That dog was a good dog and never harmed anybody. You just wait!"

He scowled blackly at Sunny Boy, jerked open the door and slammed it noisily after him.

"Poor boy!" sighed Miss May half to herself. "He's been neglected all his life. I don't blame him for being miserable, though I don't think the loss of his dog is his greatest grievance."

Then she saw Sunny Boy, who had been sitting quietly on a stool.

"What! you here all this time, chicken?" she asked gaily. "Run along back to your room—Miss Davis will think you are lost. And forget about Waddy Lutz and his dog, dear."

Sunny Boy found it difficult to forget. He talked about Waddy to Harriet, and once, when they were out walking, he thought he saw the boy in the distance, though, when he called Harriet to look, the figure had disappeared.

"Do you suppose he lives in the River Section?" he asked Harriet.

The River Section was a poorer part of town, and many neglected children roamed the streets. The boy who had stolen Sunny's new hat, just before he went to New York, had lived in the River Section. Harriet thought it very likely that Waddy Lutz lived there, too.

"I'd give him the puppy dog Grandpa gave me," said Sunny Boy, "if I knew where he lived and could tell him."

And once Sunny Boy met the policeman who had come to the school after the big dog. He remembered Sunny, and stopped and shook hands.

"Any more mad dogs in your school?" he asked.

Sunny Boy said no, and told about Waddy Lutz coming after his pet.

"You don't know where he lives, do you?" asked Sunny hopefully. "So's I could go to see him?"

"You take my advice and leave that young man alone," said the policeman seriously. "When he's ugly, he's likely to up and hit you with the first thing he finds handy. And a grudge! Glory be, can't that lad keep a grudge alive!"

So Sunny Boy gave up his plan to find Waddy Lutz, and gradually, in the weeks that followed, he thought less and less about him. But Waddy Lutz did not forget Miss May's school.

CHAPTER IX

THREE LOST KITTENS

IN the late fall there came what Harriet called a "rainy spell." It rained and rained, till all the dead leaves were wet through where they had been raked in piles, and the pretty garden that Mrs. Horton tended in the back yard was no longer pretty to look at. It would grow again next year, she said.

Sunny Boy did not mind the rain. He rather enjoyed it. He had a rubber cap that turned down over his eyes so he did not have to carry an umbrella, and he had a rubber coat and, best of all, a pair of rubber boots.

"Don't you want any errands done, Mother?" he asked one afternoon.

"Any errands?" repeated Mrs. Horton thoughtfully. "You don't want to go out again in all this storm, do you, Sunny?"

"Oh, yes," said Sunny Boy positively. "It is a very nice rain, Mother. I shake the drops off the trees and pretend it is a waterfall and I'm under it."

"Well, I have a library book that is due to-day, and if you want to go to the branch on Cameron street, you may," Mrs. Horton said. "But I shouldn't like to have you shake any raindrops on its cover."

"I won't," promised Sunny Boy. "I'll carry the book under my coat and shake the trees coming back."

The branch library on Cameron street was about three blocks away; it was very convenient for the people who lived in that neighborhood, for it saved them a long walk or ride downtown to the main library building.

Sunny Boy was careful to see that no rain fell on the book, and when he took it out from under his coat and gave it to the young woman at the library desk it was perfectly dry.

"A new magazine came to-day," she told Sunny Boy, nodding toward the low table reserved for children. "Don't you want to see the pictures?"

Sunny Boy did, and for perhaps half an hour he turned the pages, enjoying the pictures and making up stories for himself as he went along. Then he remembered that his mother might be wondering where he was, and he gave a little hitch to his rubber boots, pulled his cap down over his eyes, and started for home.

"Why, what a funny noise!" he said out loud, stopping to listen again.

He was passing a vacant lot, and the strange noise seemed to be coming from behind a large billboard. Sunny Boy had

always admired this billboard—it showed a picture of a fat little boy eating a large slice of bread and butter.

Now he did not think of the picture at all as he stepped back of the huge sign to see if he could find out what made the queer noise. It wasn't exactly crying or whining or moaning, but it sounded a little like all three.

At first Sunny Boy could see nothing, but the noise did not stop. Then he got a stick and poked about among the dead leaves and the trash that had blown back of the board, and he found—what do you suppose?—three tiny baby kittens!

"Oh, my!" said Sunny Boy, who had a habit of talking to himself when there was no one around. "I s'spect they'll be drowned if I leave 'em here."

As a matter of fact, the kittens were almost drowned already. That is, they

He took off one of his precious boots and put them in that.

were nearly dead from cold and exposure. A baby kitten, you know, can not stand cold and wet. They must be kept warm and dry. These kittens had their eyes closed and they were making the funny moaning sound Sunny Boy had heard.

"I'll take 'em home, and Mother will cure them," Sunny decided.

But three wet kittens were hard to carry and, after trying to put them in his hat and spilling them out, and trying to squeeze them into his pockets into which they wouldn't fit, he finally took off one of his precious boots and put them in that. Then he scuttled home, with one foot bare except for his stocking.

"Sunny Boy! Where in the world have you been? And what is the matter with your boot? Did it hurt you?" Mrs. Horton had been watching for him from her window and came running down-

stairs to let him in before he could ring the bell. "Is anything the matter, dear?"

"They're sick," explained Sunny Boy pitifully, holding out the boot for her to look into. "Can you cure 'em, Mother?"

Mrs. Horton took her little boy and the boot and the kittens out into Harriet's clean, warm, dry kitchen.

"Oh, Harriet!" she exclaimed as she pulled out the forlorn little animals. "I don't believe we can do a thing for them —they're almost dead now."

The kittens could not even cry, and their little heads wobbled aimlessly. They did not open their eyes.

"I don't want 'em to die!" sobbed Sunny Boy. "Please, Mother, can't you make them well again?"

"I know what we can try," said Harriet briskly. "We'll put them in the bottom oven! Not hot, you know, but with the door open and a nice cotton bed to

lie on. My sister saved some cats that way once."

And that is just what they did do. Harriet found some cotton and put it in a little basket and placed the sick kittens on the cotton. Then she popped them in the lower oven, but did not close the door. Sunny Boy could hardly be persuaded to leave the kitchen long enough to get on dry stockings, but when he came back from upstairs, Harriet told him the little cats' fur was almost dry.

"Heartless people to abandon animals like that!" she scolded vigorously. "If I didn't want kittens under foot I'd find nice homes for 'em or drown them humanely."

"Maybe the people didn't know it was going to rain," suggested Sunny Boy.

"Maybe not," admitted Harriet. "There, hear that?"

"That" was not a whine or a moan or

a cry, but a real "mew," the kind of noise your own pet kitty makes.

Harriet took the kittens out of the oven and they had their eyes open, and though they ran about unsteadily on their legs at first, they drank the warm milk she gave them greedily. In a few days they were as well as any kittens, and Harriet declared that she couldn't have them under her feet.

"It's one thing to save them from death," she declared, "but some one will have to save me from the cats. It's so now I can't stir a step without the three of 'em chasing after me."

This was true, and even Sunny Boy could see that three cats were too many for one house. Harriet said she thought it would be nice for him to keep one, and he chose the gray one with the yellow paws. But what should he do with the other two?

"Why not write and ask Grandma Horton if you can send them to her?" his mother suggested. "Write her a nice little letter and tell her we haven't room for so many kittens. I am sure the barn at Brookside always needs cats to keep the mice away."

Now that was an excellent plan and all would have been well if Sunny Boy had been content to print his letter in pencil as he usually did. But he made up his mind that he was old enough to write in ink and that he would like to surprise his grandmother with that kind of a letter.

Mrs. Horton was called to the telephone before she could ask Sunny what kind of paper he wanted for his letter and whether he wanted to write it at her desk or at his own desk in the playroom. The message was from her sister and they talked rather longer than usual. Finally,

hanging up the receiver, she remembered Sunny Boy and his letter.

"Where are you, dear?" she called.

"Here," answered Sunny Boy in a funny little voice. "I'm here in Daddy's room, Mother."

Mr. Horton had a small room at the head of the stairs where he liked to work at night when he brought home papers from his office.

Mrs. Horton came upstairs a little breathlessly.

"Why, Sunny Boy!" she gasped when she saw him. "What are you trying to do?"

CHAPTER X

MOVING PICTURES

THERE was a puddle of ink in the center of Mr. Horton's mahogany table desk. There was more ink on his leather chair. Ink was on the pretty rug, on Sunny Boy's fingers and face and across the front of his clean blouse. But most of the ink seemed to be on the very small dingy white kitten he held in one hand.

"What are you trying to do?" repeated Mrs. Horton.

"I—I thought I'd use the ink," stammered Sunny Boy. "I'm very sorry, Mother, but it spilled. Though it isn't very bad," he hastened to comfort her, "I wiped up a lot of it with Twiddles."

Twiddles was the name he had given the cat.

Well, Mrs. Horton scolded, just a little, and of course there was a great scrubbing time, and when Daddy came home he said that Sunny Boy would have to stay away from the motion picture play he had planned to see the next Saturday afternoon with Nelson and Ruth and Harriet. And he could not send Grandma Horton an ink-stained kitty, so he had to keep Twiddles and send her the gray one with yellow paws instead.

Grandma Horton wrote that she would be glad to give the cats a home, and the next week Daddy Horton took them downtown and sent them by express to Brookside, where they lived to be old gray-haired cats and had very happy times. First, though, Sunny Boy had to write another letter to ask Grandma if she would take them, and this time you

may be sure he was satisfied to print and to use a pencil.

It was a long time before another play came to the motion picture theater that Mrs. Horton thought would be interesting for children to see; it must have been fully three weeks after Sunny Boy's sad experience with the ink that Harriet came home from market one morning and announced that "Cinderella" was to be given at the Saturday matinee at one of the large downtown motion picture theaters. That was Friday, and when Sunny Boy came home from school that noon, Mrs. Horton told him that he might ask Ruth and Nelson Baker to go with him and Harriet to see the play the next afternoon.

Saturday morning was as long as the mornings of exciting afternoons always are, but finally lunch was over and Harriet's dishes were washed and dried and

she came downstairs in her new brown suit and hat, smiling and as ready as any of the three children to have a good time.

"I like to sit away up in front, don't you?" chattered Ruth as they set off on their walk, for the theater was not far enough away to make it worth while to ride.

"Not too far," said Harriet. "Now, when we go in, keep close together, for it will be dark, you know, and I don't want to lose you."

The theater was dark, to eyes accustomed to the street light, and Ruth Baker, who was so interested in the pumpkin that they could hardly drag her past the picture of the coach shown outside the theater, forgot Harriet's warning entirely. Instead of looking to see where Harriet and the usher went, she looked at the screen, and moved calmly and slowly down the wrong aisle.

When she reached the first row of seats she discovered that Harriet and Sunny Boy and her brother were not with her, and frightened by the rows of strange faces, she began to cry.

"Are you lost? Don't cry, we'll find your mother," promised a girl in a gray dress with broad white collar and cuffs, hurrying up to her.

She was an usher, and she led the weeping Ruth back to the ticket-taker's booth where Harriet was distractedly asking the ticket man if he had seen a little girl in a blue dress and coat and a red hat.

Ruth was all right, of course, when she saw Harriet, and she clung tightly to her hand all the way down to the seats where Harriet had left Sunny Boy and Nelson. They had saved a seat for Ruth and one for Harriet, and in watching "Cinderella" and her fairy godmother, Ruth soon forgot her troubles.

After the feature picture came two others, a funny one, and another that Sunny Boy especially liked. It was called "World-Famous Cities," and showed the largest cities here in America and in other countries.

Among the scenes were several of New York, and Sunny Boy was enchanted. He was sure he saw the very same traffic policeman who had told him where the toy store was and he saw a little boy riding on the top of a Fifth Avenue bus that might have been himself. The picture shifted from Fifth Avenue to a park scene and suddenly it began to rain!

How the people scurried for shelter! The ladies put newspapers over their pretty hats and the little girls picked up their white skirts and ran across the grass to the pavilions. The gutter of the asphalt roadway became a seething little river.

"Harriet!" shouted Sunny Boy, raising his voice as he always did when aroused. "Harriet, I never brought my rubber boots! And Ruth has on her best patent leather shoes!"

"Ha-ha!" laughed the fat man in the seat next to Sunny Boy's. "Forgot it was only a picture, did you? Ha-ha! I'll have to tell my little boy about you."

Of course it was funny, for Sunny Boy had forgotten that it was not real rain, not in Centronia at least. It very likely had rained when that picture was taken. A great many people laughed at the little boy who forgot and thought for the moment that he would have to go home in the pouring rain, but though they laughed it was a pleasant kind of merriment, and Sunny Boy joined in it as heartily as any one.

He and the fat man became well-acquainted during the intermission, and the

fat man said that he liked to see fairy-tale moving pictures better than any other kind. He lived in California and traveled everywhere, and whenever he saw a fairy-tale picture advertised he went to see it. Then, when he got home he told his little boy all about it.

"And won't he laugh when I tell him about you!" chuckled the fat man again. "He likes the movies and he goes as often as his mother thinks is good for him; but I never knew him to think they were so real that they worried him."

A great many of the children in Miss May's school had gone to see "Cinderella," and the following Monday they talked about the play, and Miss May and Miss Davis heard about Sunny Boy and how he had shouted.

That day they painted yellow pumpkins for their drawing lesson. Not, Miss Davis explained, because of the play they

had seen, but because it would soon be time for Thanksgiving.

"And we have to have pumpkin pies, you know," she said. "Let's see who can draw the best pumpkin and paint it so that it will look good enough to eat."

Sunny Boy worked busily at his task, and as he painted he wondered about Thanksgiving. He must ask his mother how far away it was, and if there would be snow. The last two or three mornings had been what Harriet called "nippy," and there was a fire in the furnace in the cellar at home and one in the big school furnace. Sunny Boy hoped there would be lots of snow so that he could go coasting.

"My pumpkin was the best, Mother!" he cried, rushing in upon her at noon. "Miss Davis said it was just as nice! Do you think it is good enough to go on the green board in your room?"

"How cold and red your cheeks are!" said Mrs. Horton, kissing him. "It's a beautiful pumpkin, precious, and I'll be proud to have it tacked up for Daddy to see. But come and eat your luncheon now, for we are going downtown this afternoon."

"Where are we going, Mother?" asked Sunny Boy, as Harriet brought in the hot soup.

"To buy you a heavier coat," answered Mrs. Horton. "Boys who go to school in winter weather must have thick, comfy coats to keep them warm."

CHAPTER XI

WHO TOOK THE COATS?

SUNNY BOY liked to go downtown shopping, and though he tried to walk sedately with Mother to the car, his feet simply insisted on skipping.

"Do you think there will be lots of snow this winter?" he asked anxiously. "Oliver Dunlap has a sled, Mother, and, do you know, last year he didn't use it once! There wasn't any snow."

"I wouldn't begin to worry about the snow if I were you," answered Mother hopefully. "Thanksgiving and Christmas will come just the same, you know, no matter about the weather."

"Yes, that's so," agreed Sunny Boy.

"I s'pose it would be Christmas without any snow at all, wouldn't it?"

He thought about this all the way downtown and even after they had left the trolley car and were in the store and Mrs. Horton had asked to be shown some overcoats.

"For this young man?" said the clerk.

Sunny Boy did not understand that the clerk was speaking of him until he found himself standing up on a little platform and being measured with a yard stick. At least, the polite clerk said it was a yard stick when Sunny Boy asked him what it was, and he also explained that he had to know how tall a boy was before he could find a coat to fit him.

"How would chinchilla do?" said the clerk to Mrs. Horton.

"In navy blue or dark gray," she answered, and the clerk went away.

When he came back he carried two

coats over his arm. One was gray and lined with blue and the other was dark blue and had a red lining.

Sunny Boy tried the gray one on first.

"That is too large," said Mrs. Horton decidedly. "Take it off, Sunny, and try on the other."

Sunny Boy obediently wriggled out of the gray coat and put his arms into the blue one the clerk held out to him.

"It doesn't feel just right," he ventured.

"Well, no wonder," ejaculated the clerk, smiling. "You're facing the wrong way. I didn't see what you were doing, and you've walked into it. Overcoats don't button in the back, you know."

So Sunny Boy tried again, and this time he put his arms in the right way, and the clerk buttoned the coat snugly up to his chin. There was a belt, too, and he fastened that.

"Now see how you look," he told him,

and turned him around so that he faced a long mirror.

"I look—kind of nice," Sunny Boy admitted modestly. "Don't I, Mother?"

"I think you do," she assured him laughingly. "The coat certainly fits you. We'll have it sent home and see what Daddy says."

"I like red lining and brass buttons and belts and things," sang Sunny Boy to himself, as he walked with Mother to Daddy's office, for they were to meet and go home with him. "Can I wear the coat to school, Mother?"

"That's what it is for," she answered.

The elevator boy in Mr. Horton's building knew them and grinned cheerfully as they entered his car.

"Well, it do certainly feel like winter time coming," he said to Mrs. Horton. "I declare my fingers jus' ached like the toothache this morning. Mr. Jack Frost

going to get busy with his brush pretty soon, I reckon."

Sunny Boy knew all about Jack Frost and his trick of painting on the windows cold mornings. He had other, more important things to discuss.

"I have a new coat," he informed the elevator boy conversationally, as they reached Mr. Horton's floor.

"Reckon you'll need it," said the elevator boy, opening the door with a flourish. "Going to be a cold winter, lots of snow and ice and sled-riding, my mammy says."

Mr. Horton was very glad to see them and interested to hear of the new coat, and by the time Sunny Boy had finished describing the buttons and the red lining and the wonderful belt and pockets, it was five o'clock, and Mr. Horton was ready to leave his office.

Sunny Boy was distinctly disappointed

that his coat did not come before he left for school the next morning, but as Harriet pointed out to him, he couldn't have worn it that morning anyway. Buttons, she said, must always be sewed on to new coats, so that there will not be a chance of pulling them off even in a game of tag.

So Sunny Boy went off to school in his old checked reefer and, strange to say, was as comfortable and happy as usual.

This morning Miss Davis's class played a game that was an especial favorite of theirs. It was called "Market." First they cut out pictures of different kinds of fruits and vegetables. Then they drew baskets, and pasted the pictures in so that, when it was finished, each basket looked as though it were filled and as though the small artist had been to market.

"We're not going to draw the baskets to-day," Miss Davis announced, after they

had cut out pictures for half an hour. "We are going to make them of paper, and the very best three shall have something good to eat to be carried home in them."

First she drew a diagram on the board to show them how to cut their sheets of paper, and then she had them watch her while she made a basket. As her busy fingers snipped and pasted, Miss Davis talked to them about Thanksgiving.

"Suppose you were going to fill this basket," she said to them, "with a dinner for a hungry poor family. We'll pretend it is a large basket, and deep. What would you put in it, Helen?"

"A turkey!" said Helen Graham promptly.

"Here's the turkey, then," said Miss Davis, and from her desk drawer she drew a little chocolate turkey and popped him in the basket.

"Now, Sunny Boy," she suggested, "what would you put in the basket?"

"Pumpkin pie," answered Sunny Boy.

"Here's the pie," announced Miss Davis, and she actually had a wee pie baked in a doll's patty-cake tin.

The children thought this was wonderful, and they could hardly wait their turns, so anxious were they to see the basket filled and to say what should go in it.

Oliver Dunlap voted for grapes, and two big white ones went in; Bobbie Henderson wanted raisins, and Miss Davis added a cluster of those; the Carr girls said nuts, and four big shelled almonds were added to the basket. Every one had a suggestion and Miss Davis produced the right thing from her desk drawer.

"Now you must set to work and make your baskets," she said briskly, when her basket was quite full and each child had had his say. "Do your very best, and re-

member what I have told you about the best three."

There never was a more industrious class than that one. They quite forgot to whisper, and they waited their chance at the four pastepots patiently and never pushed or shoved once. When the last basket was finished Miss Davis spread them all out on her desk and gazed at them long and earnestly.

"Do you know," she said at last, "I think every one of these baskets is good. You have taken great pains, and it shows in your work. I can't pick out the best three, for they are all excellent. Instead of three prizes, I'll have to distribute one for each basket. Suppose I let each one of you take the thing you asked to be put in my basket. Don't you think that will be a good plan?"

They thought it was a very good plan, and that was the way the matter of prizes

was settled. Helen Graham had the chocolate turkey for her basket, Oliver Dunlap had a whole little basket of grapes, Bobbie's basket was filled with raisins and the Carr girls had theirs filled with almonds. And Sunny Boy had three little patty-cake pies.

Proud as he was of his basket, he thought of something else first when he opened the front door at home.

"Has it come, Mother?" he shouted.

"Look in the parlor and see," Mrs. Horton called down to him.

Sunny Boy turned into the parlor and there, spread over a chair-back, was his precious new coat, just taken from its tissue paper wrappings as the box on the floor showed.

"Could you, could you sew the buttons on this afternoon?" he implored of his mother, "so I could wear it to-morrow to school?"

"I could," she promised, kissing him. "What is that in your hand, dear?"

"My basket," announced Sunny Boy proudly. "See, those are Thanksgiving pies, Mother. One for you, and one for Daddy, and one for Harriet."

"That's lovely of you," answered Mrs. Horton. "But you may have my little pie. You see, I shall have the basket to hang on the green board, and that's quite enough."

When Daddy Horton came home to dinner that night and saw the new coat, he said it was a "Jim Dandy."

"Here's a shiny new dime to go in the pocket for luck, Sunny Boy," he told him. "My father always gave me a shiny coin to carry in my pocket when I was a little boy."

"Got a new coat?" asked Oliver Dunlap, meeting Sunny Boy on the school

steps the following morning. "Gee, it's a nice one. Mine was new last year."

Sunny Boy had been using the second hook Carleton had told him was his for several weeks now. The pupils in Miss May's school could not get ready as quickly for the morning exercises as when school first opened. The frosty air made wraps necessary and the little girls especially were so bundled up that sometimes they couldn't find where their mufflers started to wind and then Miss Davis had to come and help them.

The cloak room was filled with coats and caps and mufflers and scarfs and a few muffs, too. Each child was very careful to hang his or her garments neatly and always to hang them on the same hook. You never saw hats on the floor, or mufflers trailing over two or three hooks in Miss Davis's cloak room.

The morning Sunny Boy wore his new

coat it was very "nippy," and there was exciting news connected with the weather to be told as soon as school opened. It seems that one of the water pipes upstairs had frozen in the night—it wasn't really very cold, but some pipes freeze readily, you know, especially those placed too near the outside wall of a house—and the frozen pipe had burst while Miss May and Miss Davis and the maid were asleep, and the water had leaked down through the ceiling, into the cloak room where Miss May's classes hung their wraps.

"So if you can let the children hang their coats in here with yours, I'll be ever so much obliged," Miss May was saying when Sunny Boy and Oliver came into the room. "I'll put my coat here, too, to save a trip upstairs."

Sunny Boy thought Miss May looked very pretty. She had on her best fur coat and her eyes were like stars and her

cheeks were pink. She had not discovered the leaky pipe until almost time for school to begin, and then she had found the telephone was also out of order; so she had slipped into her coat and had run out to summon the plumber who had a shop on the next block.

"Isn't it a glorious morning, Sunny Boy?" she cried gaily, meeting him at the door. "It's all right then, Miss Davis?"

Miss Davis said of course the other children might hang their things in her cloak room, and that if there were not enough extra hooks, some of her children would use one together. Sunny Boy and Oliver managed with one hook and several of the other boys "doubled up" the same way. The girls really had to have a hook apiece, because little girls have so many more fussy garments to wear, you know.

Miss Davis's class thought they had the nicest times in school; and, dear me, perhaps they did. Certainly this morning they were so interested they could hardly believe it was quarter past twelve when the bell rang. They played "Farm" at the sand table, and pretended it was Thanksgiving time. Miss Davis had turkeys for them, and toy cows to go in the stable the boys built from toothpicks, and she gave them cotton to use for snow, and there was even a little hobby horse to draw a toy sleigh. Sunny Boy, who knew about farms—didn't his grandfather live at Brookside and hadn't Sunny Boy paid him a long visit that very summer?—was enjoying himself so thoroughly that not even the prospect of lunch could lure him away.

"Sunny Boy, you really must come," urged Miss Davis. "I can not say goodbye to a class that is not ready. Take

your seat, dear, and then I will dismiss you."

Sunny Boy resumed his seat. He meant to fix the turkey gobbler a little straighter after Miss Davis had given them the dismissal signal, but before he could get back to the sand table something happened that made him forget all about the turkey.

Oliver Dunlap was in a hurry to go home, for he expected his uncle from California would be there when he got there. So the moment Miss Davis said, "You may go, children," Oliver shot for the cloak room. He knew his teacher preferred them to walk slowly and quietly, but then Oliver had an excuse for hurrying this particular morning. One does not have an uncle come from California every day.

"Miss Davis!" shouted Oliver, a minute after he had gone for his coat. "Oh, Miss

Davis, some one has been in and taken all our things! There's nothing here but Lottie Carr's pink scarf!"

Miss Davis stared at him, then hurried to the cloak room, the children crowding after her.

"My goodness!" Sunny Boy gasped.

Rows and rows of bare hooks confronted them. There wasn't a single coat to be seen, nor a hat nor a cap. Only a pink scarf trailed forlornly on the floor as though dropped in a hurried flight.

"Some one has stolen them!" declared Miss Davis. "How could a thief get in here? And what would he want with so many children's clothes?"

"Miss May's coat is gone, too," murmured Sunny Boy.

Miss May's fur coat was gone and so were all the wraps belonging to her pupils.

"What shall we do?" sighed Miss Da-

vis when she had gone to tell Miss May the astounding news and had brought her back with her to see with her own eyes that it was true. "We must get these children home somehow; their mothers will begin to worry if they are later than the usual time. And we can't send them without wraps. It is getting colder every minute."

"Thank fortune the telephone was repaired this morning," said Miss May. "I'll send for a taxicab and we can send the youngsters home in relays. I'll go upstairs and gather some kind of clothing together to wrap them in—that is, if the thief hasn't taken everything upstairs. The taxi man will bring back the coats and we'll keep wrapping and sending, till we get them all home. And I can telephone to the mothers whose children will be detained longer so that they will not worry."

Miss May telephoned for a taxicab and she telephoned the police station, because they would have to try to catch the thief for her. Then she went upstairs and found that nothing had been stolen from any of the rooms. She and Miss Davis had several sweaters and long coats, much too large, of course, for little folks, but since they would not have to walk in them, Miss May was sure she could make them do.

"Girls first," announced Miss May, wrapping Helen Graham in a rose-colored sweater and the oldest Carr girl in a dark green woolly coat. "There is the taxi now—tell Maria to send the man in so I can explain to him what we want him to do."

CHAPTER XII

TRACING THE THIEF

THE taxicab driver came in and listened attentively while Miss May explained that she wished him to take home the six little girls who lived close to each other, and then bring back Miss Davis and the wraps and take another load of children. He was a nice chauffeur and much interested in the story of the robbery.

"I hope you catch him, ma'am," he said to Miss May, as he started down the steps. "Anybody that steals from children is too mean to be out of jail."

Miss Davis went with the girls, and while they were gone Miss May had Maria, the pretty maid, give the waiting

children some bread and milk in the dining room so that they would not be too hungry.

More girls went on the second trip, and after three more trips only Sunny Boy and Carleton Marsh were left. Miss May had telephoned to their mothers, and Mrs. Horton wanted to send Harriet with a coat for Sunny Boy, but Miss May said the taxicab would be back in another minute and that he would be home more quickly than if Harriet came after him.

"Oh, gee," whispered Sunny Boy to Carleton when, soon after Miss May had telephoned to his mother, the bell rang. "Here's a p'liceman."

It was the same policeman who had come after the dog, and he remembered Sunny Boy and said "Hello, you," when he saw him in the hall.

He listened seriously while Miss May

explained to him about the loss of the coats.

"You don't think it could have been the plumber or his helper, do you?" she asked anxiously. "They were working in the back part of the house, but I am sure they are perfectly honest."

"Let me look at the cloak room," said the policeman.

"Here's where the thief got in," he explained, walking over to the window, while Miss May and Sunny Boy and Carleton and Maria watched him respectfully from the doorway. "See, he twisted the catch off the window and got in. I guess the children were making such a noise no one heard him."

"Why didn't he take just my fur coat —which he could more readily sell—and leave the children's clothes?" asked Miss May, puzzled.

The policeman glanced at her shrewdly.

"Do you know who I think done this job?" he asked, forgetting all the grammar he had ever learned. "I'll tell you —Waddy Lutz!"

Sunny Boy's eyes grew round with astonishment, and Miss May stared.

"Waddy Lutz!" she repeated. "The boy whose dog you took away? But I don't understand. What would he want with children's coats and hats?"

The policeman sat down on one of the little desks at the risk of crushing it to atoms, and fanned himself with his cap.

"I'll tell you, ma'am," he said comfortably. "This Waddy Lutz, according to our way of thinking, ain't never been what you might call right in his mind. He never had a very good chance, brought himself up, I guess, and there was always something the matter with his head. He

ought to be sent somewhere, but you know how it is—nobody's business to look after a chap like that."

"He couldn't wear my coat," piped up Sunny Boy suddenly. "It isn't big enough."

"I don't think he wants to wear any of 'em," explained the policeman. "The way I figure it out, he doesn't even count on selling 'em, 'cause ten to one he'd be caught in trying to dispose of such clothes. No, that kid has it in his mind that by stealing these things he is getting even with you."

"For taking his dog?" said Miss May. "He did say he would 'get even' with me. But what a queer way to go about it!"

"He's made you a lot of trouble, hasn't he?" suggested the policeman. "That way he thinks he is getting even. I'm glad he didn't cut up any worse monkey-shines. You never can tell what that

kind of a kid will take it into his head to do."

"Well, I hope you can find him," sighed Miss May. "Ever so many of the children have lost good wraps, expensive garments. And my coat was mink fur. Sunny Boy, your coat was new to-day, wasn't it?"

Sunny Boy nodded mournfully.

"And I had a new, shiny ten-cent piece in the pocket," he said.

"We'll try and get that for you," promised the policeman, rising from the desk to Miss May's secret relief. "We'll let you know, ma'am, soon as we get a clue."

He went back to the police station, and the taxicab came for Sunny Boy and Carleton. Harriet insisted on carrying Sunny Boy into the house—Carleton lived further away on another street—though Sunny Boy tried to tell her that there was nothing the matter with him.

"Harriet is so glad the thief didn't get you," Mrs. Horton explained when Sunny Boy protested.

"Oh, he wouldn't take me," Sunny Boy answered confidently. "But, Mother, my new, shiny ten-cent piece is all gone."

"Dear, dear, what a shame!" replied Mother sympathetically. "But, precious, it is your new coat that worries me. Does Miss May have any idea who took the things?"

"The p'liceman says Waddy Lutz did," replied Sunny Boy. "He's mad, you know, 'cause Miss May let the p'liceman have his dog. He isn't right in his head."

"No, I don't believe the boy is," agreed Mr. Horton when he heard the story that night. "The police ought to be able to track him rather easily. Well, so you lost your coat, did you, old man?"

"Yes, and my ten-cent piece," insisted Sunny Boy. "Miss May's great big fur

coat is all gone, too. And maybe nobody will come to school to-morrow, 'cause they won't have any coats to wear."

Every one did go to school the next day, though, either in old or borrowed coats or in new ones hastily bought the afternoon before. Sunny Boy wore his checked reefer with his sweater under it.

"Did they find Waddy Lutz? Did he really steal our coats?" were questions every one asked.

The police had not found Waddy, and it was increasingly certain that he had taken the coats. The heavy silverware in Miss May's dining room and several ivory and silver toilet articles in the bedrooms upstairs had not been touched. A thief who stole to get something to sell for money would never pass those valuable things by in favor of a lot of coats and hats.

"S'pose you met Waddy Lutz, what

would you do?" Oliver Dunlap asked Sunny Boy that noon.

"I'd—I'd—I guess I'd grab him," answered Sunny Boy doubtfully. "Wouldn't you?"

"Well, of course I want my coat back, and my leggings," admitted Oliver. "But Waddy might be mad, you know. I guess maybe I'd run and get a p'liceman."

"I wouldn't run," declared Sunny Boy decidedly.

The police failed to get hold of Waddy Lutz, and he seemed to have left Centronia. Very likely he was hiding in some other town or city till people should have forgotten that he had taken the coats. Sunny Boy continued to wear his reefer and sweater, for Mrs. Horton said that coats would be less expensive after Thanksgiving, and she would rather wait till then to buy him another.

A week or so after the loss of his coat,

Sunny Boy was walking to school with Helen Graham, who had spent the night with her aunt, a near neighbor of the Hortons, and so was able to go with Sunny Boy that morning. He was very glad to have company, for he sometimes found the walk lonesome. He and Helen were busily talking about Waddy Lutz and the missing coats when Sunny Boy happened to look behind him.

"Helen!" he whispered quickly, "look back of you. Doesn't that look like Waddy Lutz?"

Then Helen astonished Sunny Boy very much. She turned around, saw the boy a half block behind them, and immediately she started to run, pulling Sunny Boy along with her. The more he pulled back, the faster she ran. She had hooked her hand in his sweater belt, where he had left his coat open, and he could not induce her to let go.

"Let me catch him," begged poor Sunny Boy, as Helen dragged him after her. "I can get all the coats back, Helen. Oh, Helen, please stop!"

Helen Graham was a year older than Sunny Boy and very tall and strong for her age. Besides she was afraid, and fear often lends extra strength. She pulled Sunny Boy along as easily as though he had been on roller skates.

"What's the matter?" shouted Oliver Dunlap, as they passed him at the corner of his street.

"Waddy Lutz!" shrieked Helen. "He's chasing us!"

She really believed Waddy Lutz was chasing them.

Oliver took one look behind him and raced after Helen and Sunny Boy.

"Waddy Lutz!" he shouted as he ran. "Waddy Lutz is coming!"

All the boys and girls, on their way to

Miss May's school, heard, and they began to run, too, and to shout. Sunny Boy alone, protested. But no one listened to him.

"Waddy Lutz!" shrieked the crowd, rushing up the stone steps of the school and tumbling pell-mell into the hall. "Waddy Lutz is chasing us!"

"Where is he?" asked Miss May.

"Look out and you'll see him," whispered Helen fearfully. "See him, just coming round the corner?"

"That isn't Waddy Lutz," said Miss May practically. "That's a man with gray hair. Was he chasing you?"

"I—I thought he was," stammered Helen. "Anyway," she added triumphantly, "Sunny Boy said so!"

This was too much. Sunny Boy, released from Helen's grasp, backed away and glared at her scornfully. Wasn't she just like a girl!

"I said I thought it was Waddy Lutz and I wanted to stop and see if I could capture him," he told Miss May coldly. "Helen grabbed hold of my sweater and wouldn't let go. I wasn't going to run at all!"

Miss May laughed and said that if Sunny Boy ever did meet Waddy Lutz, it would not be wise to argue with him, but better to tell a policeman and let him deal with him.

The weather was very clear and frosty now, and one day Sunny Boy came home from school to find Mrs. Horton and Harriet very busy in the kitchen.

"Well, precious," his mother greeted him. "Want to taste my mincemeat? I always think the Thanksgiving pies are better if you are around to taste everything."

"O-h!" cried Sunny Boy. "Is it as near as that to Thanksgiving?"

"Two weeks from to-day," answered his mother. "Harriet and I have a great deal to do to get ready. There, dear, don't taste any more—I meant you to have only a sample."

Sunny Boy scrambled up on a high stool so that he could watch the preparations.

"I have a lot to do myself," he remarked. "I have to speak a piece in school, Mother. But I thought I had lots of time to learn it."

"My, no!" answered Mrs. Horton. "I suppose it is a short recitation, or Miss Davis would have allowed you more time. Did you bring it home with you, dear?"

Sunny Boy felt in his pocket.

"Yes'm, it's here," he reported, taking out three tangles of string, four buttons, two bent and rusty nails, several stubby lead pencils and a rather grimy handkerchief.

"Here it is," he said triumphantly, untangling a crumpled paper from the string. "Can you read it, Mother?"

Mrs. Horton gave the spoon with which she was stirring the fragrant mincemeat to Harriet, and took the paper.

"I wish you wouldn't stuff your pockets so, Sunny Boy," she sighed. "You ruin your suits. Yes, this is short—only two verses. You can learn them easily. And won't I be proud of you when I come and hear you speak it before the whole school!"

That very night, after supper, she began to help him study his verses, and before the week was gone, Sunny Boy declared confidently that he knew them "by heart."

Two or three days before the Thanksgiving entertainment at school, Miss May spoke to the children directly after the

morning singing, and explained that every year her school made a donation to the poor people who might otherwise go hungry.

"Those of you who have been here other Thanksgivings know that the Family Service Bureau comes with baskets which we try to fill," she said. "You bring your gifts to school and we place them on a long table in the hall, and after the exercises the workers of the Bureau come and take them away and pack them to send to the poor families. You may bring anything you choose, as long as it is edible, and I would rather you gave just what you think the people would like. Two potatoes you plan as your gift are worth more than a barrel of apples you ask your father to send."

Sunny Boy was so interested in this plan that he could hardly sit still at the luncheon table that noon. It was one of

those rare days when Mr. Horton came home to lunch, and he heard all about the Thanksgiving Day dinners for the poor.

"Miss Davis told us that we must put some of us into our presents," explained Sunny Boy seriously. "She told us we mustn't just say, 'Daddy, will you ask the grocer to send a dozen eggs?'—that isn't the right way, she says. Course, she said, we mustn't take things without asking. Last year one of the boys, Jim Butterworth, whose father keeps a grocery store, took a dozen cans of soup 'thout telling his father. Miss Davis says to ask, but—but—"

"Complicated, isn't it, Sunny Boy?" said Mr. Horton sympathetically. "What I think Miss May and Miss Davis mean, is that you must ask permission and advice, perhaps, but the actual work of choosing and getting your packages ready and hauling them to the school should be

done by yourself. In that way, you see, the gift will really come from you."

"What can I take?" asked Sunny Boy eagerly.

"Suppose you go down cellar this afternoon and look around," his father suggested. "You may have anything you see there that you want and can get to school. If I were you I'd take the little express wagon with me to-morrow morning. If the car wasn't laid up for repairs I'd give you a lift."

After lunch Sunny Boy went down into the cellar to see what he could find. It was a light, dry cellar and in beautiful order. All around three sides of it were bins for vegetables and fruit, and there was a hanging shelf filled with glasses of jelly and a closet full of glass jars of peaches and pears and plums and, oh, ever so many other kinds of good things.

"I'll take a pumpkin," Sunny Boy de-

cided, and he lifted one of the fat, yellow pumpkins from the bin and put it on the floor.

Then he chose some beets and some potatoes to go with the pumpkin, and a yellow turnip and a white one. There was a barrel of shiny red apples and he ate two or three while he was polishing half a dozen to go in his express wagon.

"I haven't any turkey," he mourned, "or any dessert. Wonder what I can put in for them, 'cause everybody has to have turkey an' dessert, Thanksgiving."

His eyes wandered around the cellar. There was only the coal bin he had not visited.

"Miss Davis said coal was dreadful spensive this winter," thought Sunny Boy suddenly. "I could take 'em some and they could sell it and buy a turkey. And Daddy said I could have *anything I* wanted. I'll take some coal."

He trotted upstairs and begged three paper bags from Harriet. He did not know how much coal the poor family would have to sell to buy a turkey, but he thought that three bags full would be plenty.

"Now I'll get the express wagon," he said to himself, toiling upstairs to the back hall again when he had his bags of coal filled to his liking. "But what'll I give 'em for dessert?"

He had not settled this question when he had the wagon filled and Mother came down into the cellar to see how it looked and to help him carry it upstairs where it would be ready for him to start off with in the morning.

CHAPTER XIII

A WHITE THANKSGIVING

"BLESS your heart, dearie!" said Mrs. Horton when she saw the heap of gift-offerings Sunny Boy had arranged on the cellar floor, "you are going to take a whole dinner, aren't you?"

"But I haven't any dessert," complained Sunny Boy. "If there's any little boys and girls in the poor family, they'll feel real bad if their mother says nobody sent 'em any dessert."

"That would be too bad, wouldn't it?" agreed Mrs. Horton. "Do you think two tumblers of my nice raspberry jelly would do, dear? Most little boys and girls like jelly."

"Yes, I think that would do," conceded

Sunny Boy. "They could eat it on bread and butter. Thank you very much, Mother."

The express wagon was pretty well filled, and after he had it all ready Oliver Dunlap came to ask Sunny Boy to come out and play till supper time. Oliver, when he saw the wagon, said that Miss May didn't want the things brought to the school till the day after the next.

"When we recite, you know," Oliver explained.

Sunny Boy looked disappointed. With his usual activity, he had plunged into his gift-planning, forgetting that Miss May had said they were not to bring their offerings till the day before Thanksgiving.

"Never mind," Mrs. Horton comforted him. "Everything will keep, precious, and it will not be necessary to unpack the

wagon. Day after to-morrow will be here before you know it."

Sure enough it was. Sunny Boy could hardly bother with breakfast, so eager was he to take his express wagon and its load to school. Mother promised to come at eleven o'clock when the exercises were to be given, and altogether the day promised to be an exciting one.

The hall of Miss May's school looked like a market when Sunny Boy reached there. The long table had been set up the night before, and already onions and carrots and potatoes and canned soups and vegetables were arranged on it in straggling rows.

Sunny Boy had to make three trips up the steep steps before he had his load carried in. He would let no one help him, remembering Miss Davis's wish that each giver put something of himself or herself into the gift. When he breathlessly

brought in the coal there was a shout of laughter.

"What are you going to do with that, Sunny Boy?" teased Carleton Marsh. "Nobody can eat coal."

Sunny Boy looked anxiously at Miss May, who was not laughing.

"I thought they could sell it," explained Sunny Boy. "Miss Davis said coal was spensive this year, and I thought this was enough to buy a turkey."

"Look a-here!" cried Carleton, who had poked an investigating finger through one of the paper bags. "This isn't coal —it's money!"

They emptied the bags on a clean newspaper spread on the floor and there, tucked away in the coal, they found a little muslin bag, one in each paper bag, and in each cloth bag were four shining silver quarters.

"Did you put 'em there, Sunny?" asked the children.

No, Sunny Boy had not even known they were there.

"I'll tell you what I think," said Miss May. "I think some one at Sunny Boy's house saw how very much he wanted the poor family to have a turkey, and when he wasn't looking, perhaps at night when he was asleep, put this money in among the coal. Now the poor family may buy their turkey with the three dollars and cook him with the coal instead of selling it."

This struck every one as a beautiful arrangement, and they did not laugh at Sunny Boy any more.

Indeed, they soon had other things to laugh at. Helen Graham brought canned soup and molasses candy, and while the soup was all right, she had carried the candy in her muff and it had melted and

stuck to the lining. They had to scrape it out, and of course it was not fit to give to any one then.

Jessie Smiley was late and explained that she had started with a dozen eggs and had stubbed her toe at the curb and dropped the box. Every one of those eggs was broken! Jessie was a persevering child, and she ran all the way home and got a shoe box full of potatoes. She knew if she fell down with those, at least they would not break.

"Didn't you bring anything, Jimmie?" the children asked Jimmie Butterworth, the boy whose father had a grocery store, when they saw him come in the door empty-handed.

"It's on the front steps," said Jimmie calmly.

"Bring it in," directed Miss Davis briskly. "Why have you left it outside,

Jimmie? Is it heavy? Do you want help?"

"It's sugar!" blurted Jimmie desperately. "The bag busted, and I couldn't sweep it up."

Miss May disliked to lose the sugar, but she had to laugh.

"Next year we'll have to adopt a rule that we prefer tinned food and vegetables like onions and potatoes," she smiled ruefully. "Eggs are not safe, and now it seems sugar is also on the dangerous list."

The table was well filled by the time all the children had come, and after they had their usual morning exercises it was time to get ready for the entertainment.

Miss May's room was arranged with rows of chairs for the parents, in place of the usual desks and seats, and her pupils had to stay across the hall in Miss Davis's room, and those who were to recite or sing were supposed to go up on the plat-

form where Miss May's desk usually stood and speak or sing from there.

"Know your piece, Sunny?" asked Oliver Dunlap, who was also to recite.

"I—I guess so," quavered Sunny Boy. "I said it to Miss Davis last night, and Mother heard me this morning. But do you suppose everybody will look at you when you go up on that platform?"

Oliver said yes, he supposed they would, and Sunny Boy began to have an uncomfortable feeling down his straight little backbone.

The doorbell rang, and Maria ushered in three mothers. Then they began to arrive quickly, in groups of two or three, and soon all the chairs in Miss May's room were taken and it was time for the exercises to begin.

Miss May, in a pretty black lace dress, stood up and read the names of the pupils as they were to recite. First six little

girls sang a song, Miss Davis playing the music for them, and then four boys had a recitation. Sunny Boy wished he had been one of the four; it wasn't half so hard to stand up there with three other boys and talk about Thanksgiving, as it was to have to face a roomful of people all by oneself.

His turn came after the four boys had finished. He heard his name called and walked into the room and up on the platform and made a little bow. Then he looked at the audience.

Now Sunny Boy had, in company with the other children, practiced reciting his piece on that very platform. But he had never looked into so many faces, and for the moment he forgot what he was to do. Then his mother's face seemed to stand out from the others, and she was smiling at him just as she smiled at home while

He got along beautifully until he reached the second verse.

listening to his recitation. Sunny Boy took a deep breath.

He got along beautifully until he reached the second verse. Miss Davis, who held the book, prompted him in a low voice. She did not intend that any one should hear her and expected Sunny Boy to repeat the line and finish the verse. But Sunny Boy was, above all things, honest.

"Miss Davis told me," he announced engagingly to his interested audience. "But I remember the rest of it," and he recited it at a gallop.

They clapped him heartily, and then he was free to go down and sit with Mother and hear the rest of the songs and recitations. Afterward Miss May and Miss Davis and Maria passed hot chocolate and ice-cream and cake, and then all the children said good-bye to the two

teachers, for there would be no school till the next Monday.

"It looks like snow," said Mrs. Horton as she and Sunny Boy walked home together. "Wouldn't it be nice, dear, if we had snow for Thanksgiving to-morrow?"

However, it did not snow the next day. The Hortons went to church in the morning and Aunt Bessie and Miss Martinson, who lived with her and whom Sunny Boy called Aunt Betty, came to dinner. In the afternoon Sunny Boy and Daddy took a walk to the park and Sunny Boy fed the gray squirrels plenty of nuts so that they, too, might have a Thanksgiving dinner.

Sunny Boy went to bed early that night, for he was sleepy after a busy day.

"Look out of your window," Daddy called to him the next morning. "See what you think of Glenn Avenue this morning."

Sunny Boy pattered to the window in his white pajamas.

"Snow!" he shouted gleefully. "Heaps of snow! And, oh, Daddy, it's snowing some more."

Sure enough, the ground was white and the feathery flakes were falling swiftly. Harriet was already sweeping off the walk, but almost as fast as she cleared it the snow covered it again.

"I can play out all day," announced Sunny Boy with satisfaction. "No school to go to. Play snowballs with me, Daddy?"

"I'd like to know who would earn the money to buy you red mittens if I stayed at home to play in the snow," answered Mr. Horton, pretending to grumble. "No, I'm afraid you and Ruth and Nelson will have to do the playing for me."

"Nelson has a sled," said Sunny Boy to Mother, when Daddy had gone to the

office and Harriet was clearing off the breakfast table. "He goes coasting on the hill. Maybe I'm big enough to have a sled this year, Mother?"

"Why don't you write and tell Santa Claus so?" suggested Mrs. Horton. "We'll be likely to have more snow after Christmas than before. Who rang the bell, Harriet?"

The doorbell had rung and Harriet had gone to answer it while they were talking.

"Two boys who want to clean out the gutter and area," answered Harriet. "I did the walk, Mrs. Horton, but I didn't have time for anything else before breakfast. They want thirty-five cents to do it."

"Oh, Mother!" cried Sunny Boy eagerly, "can't I help? I can put on my rubber boots and help shovel."

"I wouldn't shovel, if I were you," ob-

jected Mrs. Horton. "Let the older boys who want to earn money do that. You might take the broom, if they don't mind, and sweep after they have cleared the steps."

Sunny Boy ran upstairs for his rubber boots and his sweater and mittens, for he had noticed that the two boys already at work on the area steps did not wear overcoats.

"I'll be plenty warm," he assured his mother. "Working keeps folks warm."

"Hello!" said the larger boy when he saw Sunny Boy come out, ready to help. "Your mother's paying us for this, you know."

"Yes, but she said I could sweep, if you didn't mind," announced Sunny Boy. "I can sweep good, honest I can."

"Oh, let the kid muss around," advised the younger lad, raising a round, flushed face above the iron railing and grinning

at Sunny Boy cheerfully. "He only wants to play in it the way my little brother does."

The two boys shoveled with good will and Sunny Boy swept little paths all about him until they should be ready to have him help. As they worked they talked to him, and Sunny Boy learned that every year they earned their Christmas money this way.

"Last year, though, there wasn't any snow," sighed the older boy. "We're hoping there will be a blizzard a week this year till after Christmas."

Just as Sunny Boy was starting to sweep down the steps, some one whistled to him and there was Oliver Dunlap and Nelson Baker, each with a sled.

"Ask your mother if you can come coasting," shouted Oliver peering over the railing at Sunny Boy. "It's great on the hill."

"Do you really need me?" Sunny Boy asked the two snow shovelers politely.

And when they said no kindly and that they would do it all themselves, Sunny Boy ran in to take Harriet her broom and ask Mother if he could go coasting.

"If you will be careful, and keep out of the way of the big sleds," she told him.

Sunny Boy promised, and he and Nelson and Oliver started for the hill which was the only good place to coast in Centronia.

"Gee, see the crowds!" cried Sunny Boy as they came in sight of the street that led to the hill. "I guess it is 'cause there's no school."

"You can't coast during school time when there is school," Oliver explained. "There's a policeman stands here and asks you why you're not in school."

Sunny Boy held his breath and shut his eyes the first time he went down with

Nelson, but he soon grew used to the flying sensation. After he had made a few trips with Nelson, Oliver grew impatient to have him try his sled.

"I can steer fine," he boasted. "Come on, Sunny, and watch me dodge all the big sleds."

Sunny Boy obediently seated himself behind Oliver and grasped the edge of his sweater tightly. Nelson gave them a push and the sled started down.

Zip! they shot around a bobsled full of shrieking riders. Biff! the leg of a boy on a single sled scraped Sunny Boy's knee.

"Look out, Oliver, you're going to hit that boy in the orange muffler!" shouted Sunny Boy uneasily.

"Hit nothing!" retorted Oliver confidently. "You just watch me—"

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

SMASH! Oliver had apparently steered his sled directly for the boy who wore the orange muffler.

There was a cry of pain from Oliver. Sunny Boy felt himself hurled forward and then sink down into something warm and dark and soft.

"For the love of Mike! the child is buried completely," he heard a deep, rough voice say, and some one dragged him out into the gray light of the snowy day.

It was the policeman who had come to Miss May's school and taken away Waddy Lutz's dog.

"Hello!" said Sunny Boy shyly, rubbing his eyes.

"It's you, is it?" grinned the policeman. "What are you doing here?"

"I was watching Oliver steer," answered Sunny Boy truthfully.

"Well, Oliver may be a fine coaster," admitted the policeman, "but he's skinned his finger this trip. You'd better take my advice and go home. There's too many older boys on the hill for it to be safe for you kids. You can coast afternoons next week when the big boys are in school. Be off with ye, now."

Oliver was ready enough to go home. His finger was bleeding, and though it did not hurt much, he wanted to tie a rag around it he said. Nelson had seen the collision from the top of the hill and had come running down, dragging his sled after him. He, too, was ready to go home, and they went out in Sunny Boy's back yard and built a snow man at Har-

riet's suggestion, which was almost as much fun as coasting.

The next Monday school began again, and every one was very glad to see every one else after the brief vacation. The snow was soon an old story, for it snowed every few days and the streets and walks and steps of the houses were continually covered in white.

The talk was all of Christmas now, and the shops downtown were filled with the most beautiful things. Whenever he could coax any one to go with him, Sunny Boy loved to go down to the shopping district and look in the windows. There was to be a Christmas play in school, too, and Sunny Boy was to be an elf. So you can see that he was very busy indeed getting ready for the holidays.

"I have some good news for you, Sunny Boy," Mr. Horton said one morning at

the breakfast table. "I wonder if you can guess."

"Waddy Lutz brought my coat back?" ventured Sunny Boy, who certainly said unexpected things at unexpected times.

"Mercy!" cried Mrs. Horton. "You don't think about that coat still, do you, dear? Don't you like the little brown one?"

For his mother had bought Sunny Boy a handsome little brown coat a few days after Thanksgiving and he wore it to school every day.

"I like the blue one best," said Sunny Boy. "I guess I can't pick out the good news, Daddy."

"Then I'll pick it out for you," responded his daddy promptly. "Grandpa and Grandma Horton are coming to spend Christmas with us!"

How Sunny Boy's eyes did shine! He loved Grandpa and Grandma dearly, and

he had not seen them for nearly six long months. And he had so many questions to ask about Brookside and the animals there, and about Araminta the little girl who helped Grandma, and Jimmie who was learning to be a farmer.

"My grandpa's coming to see me!" Sunny Boy bragged in school. "He's coming Christmas!"

"So's mine," insisted Lottie Carr.

"And my grandma's coming too," added Sunny Boy.

"Well, so is mine," retorted Lottie.

Would you believe it, ever so many grandmas and grandpas were coming to spend Christmas in Centronia, though not every child had, like Sunny Boy, both a grandpa and a grandma.

"Do you s'pose it's too early to make out my list for Santa Claus?" asked Sunny Boy one evening after dinner.

"I should say to-night was a fine time,"

his daddy encouraged him. "Let's go up to my den and I'll get you a pencil and paper, and you can write at one end of my desk."

"There's—there's rather a lot of things I want," confessed Sunny Boy, when he found himself with pencil and paper and nothing to do but write a letter to the good old saint.

"Well, do you know," said Mr. Horton confidentially, "I have an idea Santa Claus would prefer to have you send him a complete list—all the things you just can't do without, you know. Then, if he hasn't every single thing in stock, he can still fill your stocking with the other gifts you ask for."

"Yes, that is a good plan," admitted Sunny Boy thoughtfully.

He curled up in the chair, put his tongue in his cheek, and applied himself busily to the letter.

"How do you spell 'dear'?" he asked presently.

"The kind with four feet?" said Mr. Horton seriously. "That's d-e-e-r. But if you mean Mother, that's d-e-a-r."

"Shall I address it?" was Sunny Boy's next question, as he folded up his letter into half a dozen creases and stuffed it in the envelope Mr. Horton had given him.

"Always direct a letter," his daddy answered. "I'll mail it for you, but you must put the address on. Seems to me I have it in my address list somewhere—yes, here it is."

To Sunny Boy's intense delight, Mr. Horton drew out the little green leather-covered book in which he jotted down business addresses and telephone numbers. Surely he was a wonderful father to carry Santa Claus' address with him!

"Mr. S. Claus," read Mr. Horton

aloud. "Number Six Snow Street, Icicle County, North Pole Land. Got it?"

He had to help Sunny Boy with the spelling, and repeat the long address twice, but finally Sunny Boy had it all printed on the envelope.

"Aren't you going to read it to me?" asked his mother, disappointedly.

"I forgot," and Sunny Boy hastily drew out the letter and unfolded it.

"Dear Sandy Claws," he read. "Please, if you have room in your sleigh, bring me a red sled and a searchlight and some lead soldiers and ice-skates and a baseball game. And, if you don't mind, some candy and popcorn and a little Christmas tree. I have been good for a whole year. Lovingly your Sunny Boy. P.S.—I have been good most all the time, I mean."

"So you have, precious," agreed Mrs. Horton warmly. "I'm sure Santa Claus

will be glad to get that letter, and he will try to bring you as many of the presents as he can."

Sunny Boy was out in the kitchen the next morning before breakfast, to consult with Harriet.

"Listen," he whispered, standing on tiptoe to reach Harriet's ear as she stood at the table mixing muffin batter. "Listen, Harriet; I have to go and buy Mother a Christmas present, and it has to be a s'prise."

"Of course," agreed Harriet. "Christmas isn't Christmas, without surprises. Do you want me to go downtown with you this afternoon?"

"Oh, yes," replied Sunny Boy, nodding vigorously. "I have my money in my tin bank; but you mustn't tell Mother what we are going for."

"I heard her say she has some errands she wants done," said Harriet capably.

"I'll offer to do those and you can go along to help and that will be your chance to do your shopping."

Sunny Boy almost ran home from school that afternoon, so eager was he to go shopping with Harriet. If Mrs. Horton had not been busy with a hundred pleasant secrets of her own, she surely would have seen that her little boy was keeping something back by main force. Sunny Boy wriggled and giggled and his face fairly beamed, but he managed to shake the pennies out of his bank and start off with Harriet without disclosing his plans.

"What will twenty-five pennies buy?" he asked Harriet while they were on the car.

"Oh, a great many things," she answered wisely. "You don't want to make up your mind until you see everything."

Harriet was surely the nicest person

with whom to shop. She never hurried and was never impatient. She went upstairs and down in every store with Sunny Boy and looked at all the things marked twenty-five cents and was just as interested as he was.

"I think, Harriet," Sunny Boy announced when they were having chocolate ice-cream while Harriet rested her feet and Sunny Boy thought over the gifts they had seen, "I think Mother would like that square thing to put a tea pot on. Don't you?"

"You mean that blue and white tile?" Harriet asked. "Yes, I'm sure she would like that. You know she can use it for the coffee pot mornings, too, and it will match all her pretty blue and white dishes."

So they went back, when they had finished their ice-cream, to the counter where Sunny Boy had seen the tile, and

he bought it. It was just twenty-five cents. The clerk had it wrapped with a bit of pasteboard around it so he could carry it home without breaking it, and then Sunny Boy went with Harriet while she bought some pink wool for Mrs. Horton and some gilt braid and a package of Christmas seals.

"You bring the tile up to my room some afternoon," Harriet told Sunny Boy as they walked home. It was snowing again and both of them loved to walk in snow. "I'll do it up for you in white tissue paper and give you some pretty seals to go on it."

When Mrs. Horton was putting out the light in his room that night, Sunny Boy said he had something to tell her. She came over and sat on the edge of the bed and he sat up and whispered to her for, of course, secrets have to be whispered or they are not secrets at all.

"I want to buy a present for Harriet," Sunny Boy whispered. "And I want to buy a present for Daddy. And there are Grandma and Grandpa. And I have thirty cents in my bank."

"All right," whispered Mother. "You and I will go shopping in the five-and-ten-cent store day after to-morrow. And now you must go to sleep because you have to work hard in school to-morrow."

They had a rehearsal of the Christmas play the next afternoon in school, and the children had to come back after lunch. Some of them grumbled because they had planned to go coasting, but Sunny Boy enjoyed being an elf. He liked, as he told his mother, everything about Christmas!

"When will Grandpa and Grandma come?" he kept asking. "Seems to me it's most time now."

"They'll be here next week," Mrs. Horton said. "Don't wish for Christmas to

come any faster, Sunny, for I have more to do now than I have time to do it in. Don't you want to help me tie up these packages?"

Sunny Boy did, of course, and he cut lengths of string for Mother after she had measured them, and tied the hardest little knots for her and was really a great help.

"There!" announced Mrs. Horton with satisfaction, after they had tied up some half a dozen parcels. "These go to the friends who live far away. We'll mail them on our way downtown. And now we must start, if we are to get any shopping done this afternoon."

Sunny Boy, turned loose to browse in the five-and-ten-cent store, felt as though he were walking through a fairy story. There were tables and tables of glittering ornaments for the Christmas tree; there were boxes of soldiers and paper dolls; there were games galore; even the tin pots

and pans were beautiful, they winked and blinked at him so cheerily.

"I don't know what to buy," mourned Sunny Boy, after half an hour's inspection. "I can't buy everything."

"Well, precious, I'm sure Daddy would like this paper weight," suggested Mrs. Horton. "You know how he scolds if the vacuum cleaner blows the papers off his desk when Harriet is cleaning. Don't you think this one with the picture of the dog on it is pretty?"

"All right, I'll give Daddy that," Sunny Boy decided, vastly relieved to have one gift off his mind. "Now what'll I get for Harriet?"

"Harriet wants a shopping bag to take to the store with her," said Mrs. Horton. "I've heard her say so, many times. She'll like this kind—they call them a 'net' and they hold, oh, ever so many parcels."

So Sunny Boy bought the paper weight and the net bag.

"Oh, I see what Grandma would like!" cried Sunny Boy, his eye caught by some very gorgeously decorated paper napkins. "Grandma has picnics at Brookside, and she'll like them to carry with her when she and Araminta eat in the woods."

Mrs. Horton thought they had better look a little further, but Sunny Boy was entranced with his idea, and as it was his present the paper napkins with their red and yellow flowers were bought.

That left five cents for Grandpa's present, and Sunny Boy bought, again his own selection, a package of envelopes, "because Grandpa writes a lot of letters at his desk where he kept that paper out of which I made a kite."

The more Sunny Boy thought about his purchases, after they were wrapped up

and he was carrying them, the better he liked them.

They had mailed their parcels at the post-office before they had begun to shop, so now they hurried home, for it had taken Sunny Boy so long to make up his mind that it was almost dinner time before they were out of the store.

"Here's a telegram!" cried Mrs. Horton as they went in their front door, picking up a yellow envelope from the hall table. "Oh, Sunny, what do you think! Grandpa and Grandma Horton are coming to-morrow, three whole days sooner than they had planned! Isn't that lovely!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Sunny Boy, trying to stand on his head. "Now they can see me be an elf in the play."

The big, warm station was blazing with light, and it was Sunny Boy who first spied Grandpa Horton. The train had

been exactly on time, and the Hortons had lost a little time in getting to the station.

"Grandpa!" shouted Sunny Boy, in a voice heard over half the station. "How's Peter and Paul and Mrs. Butterball?"

"Well, bless his heart, he remembers the horses and cows!" cried Grandpa Horton, gathering Sunny Boy up in his arms and giving him a bear-hug. "My, my, Sunny Boy, what a big boy you are getting to be! Jimmie wouldn't know you."

Grandma Horton was waiting a chance to hug Sunny Boy and Grandpa put him right in her arms.

"Brought you something, lovey," she whispered, as she kissed him.

"No secrets," scolded Grandpa Horton, kissing Sunny Boy's mother. "Can't be telling secrets before Christmas."

Sunny Boy had forgotten how nice his

grandfather and grandmother were. He sat on the back seat between them going home, and asked two hundred questions more or less, all about Brookside and his friends there. Araminta was going to school, Grandma told him, and Jimmie was in the agricultural college.

"I go to school, too," said Sunny Boy proudly. "You'll see me Tuesday. I'm an elf in a play."

He followed Grandma up to her room when they reached the house, because she said the "something" was in her satchel. It proved to be six little gingerbread men with raisin eyes and currant buttons on their brown coats.

"I'll take 'em to school to-morrow, to show the boys," chuckled Sunny Boy delightedly. "That is, if they last."

CHAPTER XV

SUNNY BOY'S DISCOVERY

MRS. HORTON saw to it that five of the six gingerbread men "lasted" till the next morning. Sunny Boy kept one more for himself and took the other four to school where they were much admired and quickly divided into small pieces and eaten by his friends.

"My grandpa and grandma came, too," Lottie Carr reported. "They're coming to see me be a fairy in the play Tuesday."

"Unless you give me your attention at once, every one of you," announced Miss Davis solemnly, "there won't be any play for these grandmas and grandpas to come to see."

That made the children pay strict attention, you may be sure, and they had such a good rehearsal that Miss May said they might go home an hour earlier than usual, all except the children who had special parts.

Sunny Boy was not one of these, and he hurried home to find his mother and his grandmother up to their chins in tissue paper and string and Christmas cards.

"And they're going shopping this afternoon," Grandpa said to Sunny Boy. "Tell you what, boy, let you and me take a walk; shall we? We don't want to go rushing about among a lot of crazy people trying to finish their Christmas lists, do we? Why, I had my shopping done a month ago!"

"Mine's all done, too," declared Sunny Boy proudly, remembering the tile neatly done up in tissue paper and red seals that

Harriet had given him, and the paper weight and the shopping bag also prettily wrapped and tied. "Let's take a walk, Grandpa!"

"Are we going any place?" he asked when they set off together after lunch, two roly-poly cheerful figures in warm coats and mittens. Yes, Grandpa Horton wore mittens, too, just as Sunny Boy did.

"Why I think so," said Grandpa Horton pleasantly. "I've a fancy to see the place where we used to live before we bought Brookside. It's on the edge of the city, but I don't believe it will be too long a tramp for you."

"Did you and Grandma live in Centronia?" asked Sunny Boy, wonderingly. "Didn't you always live at Brookside?"

"Not always," said his grandpa. "You see," he explained, "it was this way: My father and mother lived in this house we are going to see, and when I was fifteen

or so, they bought Brookside and we went there to live. But Grandma never lived in Centronia."

"Then Daddy didn't live in the house we're going to look at?" questioned Sunny Boy.

"Oh, no," answered Grandpa Horton. "When I lived there I had no little boy Harry. He was born years later. Why, Sunny Boy, when I was a lad in Centronia it was just a village; no street cars, no pavements, no electric lights. Our house was in the center of the village and we had a barn and kept a horse and cow, as nearly every other family did. The city has spread out the other way till now, your father tells me, the old house is left on the outskirts."

It proved to be a rather long walk, and though they took it slowly, both Grandpa Horton and Sunny Boy were panting a little and Sunny Boy had very red cheeks

when they finally came in sight of the house.

"It doesn't look very neat," said Sunny Boy critically. "Does it, Grandpa?"

Indeed it was a forlorn place, a crazy half-collapsed house, with every window stuffed with rags, the roof sagged in at one end, and the bricks tumbling from the chimney at the other.

The barn stood squarely behind the house and could not be seen unless one walked around to the side. An old driveway was filled with rubbish, and Sunny Boy and his grandfather had to climb over piles of ashes and empty tin cans to reach the barn door.

"I guess nobody lives in this house," remarked Sunny Boy, staring up at the gaping windows.

"No indeed, and hasn't for years," replied Grandpa Horton. "My, that's a

chill wind blowing around the corner of that barn!"

"Somebody lives in the barn," cried Sunny Boy eagerly.

"Oh, no, I guess not," said Grandpa Horton serenely. "Couldn't anybody live in such a ramshackle place; beam might fall and hit 'em any minute."

The barn was worse than the house. That is, while the roof had not fallen in, one side of the building was torn completely away and the snow and rain and wet, dead leaves had drifted in and half covered the stairs that led up to the second story.

"Somebody lives there," insisted Sunny Boy, whose bright eyes missed nothing. "See, Grandpa!"

He pointed to a bottle half filled with frozen milk on the ground before the barn door and an old torn cap that lay near it.

"I believe you're right," agreed Grandpa Horton. "Some poor tramp couldn't find any better winter quarters, most likely. Bless us, what's that?"

The figure of a tall, awkward boy appeared in the doorway, a figure that Sunny Boy instantly recognized. For a brief moment the boy stared at him, then leaped for the side of the barn that was open.

"Stop him!" shrieked Sunny Boy. "Oh, Grandpa, make him stop! It's Waddy Lutz!"

Grandpa Horton thought for an instant that his small grandson had lost his mind. He stood dancing up and down and shouting, hemmed in by a pile of rubbish on one side and a close hedge of dead shrubbery on the other. The tall boy was streaking across the fields, never once turning to look back.

"I'm afraid I don't understand," said

Grandpa Horton patiently. "Do you know the tramp? Why should I stop him? And what did you say is his name?"

"Waddy Lutz," repeated Sunny Boy. "And he took all our coats; at least Miss May and the p'liceman think he did. My coat had a ten-cent piece in the pocket."

He was obliged to tell his grandfather the whole story, from the day the dog ran into the school until the coats were missed. When Grandpa Horton thoroughly understood, he proposed that they go in and look the barn over.

"If that young rascal was living here," he said to Sunny Boy, "ten to one, he's left something that will help the police follow him up. Anyway, seeing as he has left without locking his front door, I think we'll step in and size up his housekeeping."

The first floor of the barn was abso-

lutely empty, save for a few piles of old rags in the corners and the rusted wheels of a wagon.

"We'll go upstairs," said Grandpa Horton, when they had seen all there was to see on this floor. "Let me go ahead, and take it slowly, Sunny Boy, for the steps may be rotten with wear and age."

They went up, one step at a time, and keeping close to the wall, for there was no railing. The moment Sunny Boy caught a glimpse of this second floor, he gave a shout.

"Grandpa! See! There are all the coats!" he cried. "Waddy Lutz did take 'em, didn't he?"

Sure enough, hanging from hooks driven into a low beam that ran the length of the loft were the coats and wraps that had been so mysteriously stolen from Miss Davis's cloak room.

"Look, Grandpa," called Sunny Boy from one end of the row of dangling garments, "here's my coat. And, yes, the ten-cent piece is in the pocket. Gee!"

"Don't touch anything," said Grandpa Horton, as Sunny Boy was about to drag down his coat. "We must leave everything just as it is, and let the police take charge. I'll try to get some one in the neighborhood to watch the barn while we go to the station house."

"There's Miss May's fur coat!" cried Sunny Boy gleefully. "And Helen Graham's coat; and Carleton's new cap. And, oh, Grandpa, look—they're hanging just the way they did that morning in the cloak room. I 'member, 'cause we had to double up on the hooks so Miss May's class could put their things in our room. Oliver Dunlap used my hook, and that's his sweater hanging under my coat."

And that was just what Waddy Lutz had done. Some queer twist in that poor brain of his had enabled him to remember just how the wraps were hung, after one swift glance, and he had carefully followed that arrangement in the barn. Every coat and cape was carefully brushed and free from dust, and though the glimpse Sunny Boy had had of him showed that Waddy's clothes were thin and patched, it was plain to be seen that none of the garments had been worn.

"He took good care of 'em, didn't he?" said Sunny Boy, following his grandfather downstairs. "Maybe he didn't really mean to steal them."

"If we once get hold of him we'll help him," promised Grandpa Horton earnestly. "There's a woman waiting to speak to us. I'll ask her to watch the place in case Waddy comes back."

"You want that crazy young one that's

been living in the barn?" said the woman, who had thrown an apron over her head and come out from one of the poor-looking houses on the other side of the street. "I'll bet he's up to no good, living like a heathen the way he does. I told my husband this morning, it was a mercy he didn't burn the barn down over his head some night."

"I'd like to see him very much," said Sunny Boy's grandfather. "I was going to ask you if you'd mind watching the barn for half an hour or so, to see if the boy returns. I don't think it will be dark that soon."

"Won't be dark for an hour yet," said the woman. "I'll take my knitting and sit in the front room—he wouldn't come up the street if he saw me standing here. Thank you, sir. Yes I'll be sure to watch."

Sunny Boy heard the jingle of money, and the woman's face brightened. Perhaps she, too, had Christmas shopping in mind.

"You didn't tell her 'bout the coats, Grandpa," objected Sunny Boy as they walked briskly out to the car line, for Grandpa Horton was in too much of a hurry to walk to the police station.

"No, I didn't want the news to get around the neighborhood," his grandfather answered. "If Waddy Lutz should come back and find half a dozen women examining the coats he has taken such care of, we never in the world should be able to lay our hands on him. Here's the station house now. We'll see what they have to say."

You may be sure that the police were interested to hear what Grandpa Horton and Sunny Boy had discovered in the old barn. The policeman who had come to

school and taken away the dog and who always remembered Sunny Boy was just going off duty as they came in, but when he saw Sunny Boy and heard the story he declared that instead of going home to supper he was going out with another officer to the barn.

"The boy won't go back, but we'll bring in the coats, sir," he said to Grandpa Horton. "Then the children can identify 'em here. Waddy Lutz will sleep in his old haunt under the fruit stand to-night, I'll bet a cookie. It's been too cold for him to try that trick lately, but he'll risk it to-night."

Sunny Boy thought the policeman was quite wonderful, because, as it turned out, that was just what Waddy Lutz did do. Sunny Boy and Grandpa Horton went home directly from the police station, and in the morning the sergeant telephoned to say that Waddy Lutz had been arrested.

He was found asleep under a rickety fruit stand in the downtown district.

"What will they do to him, Daddy?" Sunny Boy asked anxiously. "They won't put him in prison, will they? He didn't mean to steal our coats, I don't believe."

"They won't send Waddy to prison," Daddy Horton replied cheerfully. "He'll be sent to a sort of school, Sunny, where he will be taught all the things that other boys know and he never had a fair chance to learn. They'll make a real boy out of him, and he need never be cold or hungry again."

So Sunny Boy felt happier about Waddy Lutz than he had for a long time. When he got to school he found that the children had heard about the discovery of the coats.

"Oh, Sunny Boy!" cried Oliver Dunlap, "all the exciting things happen to

you. Tell us how you found the coats? Were they buried under piles of hay?"

"Is my light blue scarf all right?" asked Helen Graham. "What a horrid boy that Waddy Lutz must be!"

"No, he isn't!" retorted Sunny Boy bravely. "He took care of all our things. Grandpa says he must have been awful cold in his old clothes, 'specially at night, but he never used any of the coats to cover up with. And my daddy says they're going to send him to some school where they'll make a real boy out of him. So there!"

"Good for you, Sunny Boy," said Miss Davis warmly. She had overheard. "Waddy Lutz never had a fair chance. His father and mother didn't take care of him when he was little and send him to school. Poor Waddy has seldom had even enough to eat."

Every one who had lost a coat or other

wrap had to go and identify it and there was not a garment missing. Before they took Waddy Lutz away, Miss May went to see him, and Grandpa and Daddy Horton, and Waddy shook hands with them and said that he didn't intend to keep the coats only long enough to get even with Miss May for letting the police have his dog.

It was lucky that most of the rehearsals for the Christmas play had been held before the coats were found, for the boys and girls who were to take part in the play had their heads so full of deserted barns and lost wraps and Waddy Lutz that Miss May declared she didn't see how they were ever going to remember their lines.

However, when Tuesday afternoon came and all the mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers were sitting in rows in the pretty white chairs

in Miss May's room where the Thanksgiving entertainment had been held, the fairies and the elfs and the poor children and the rich children and dear old Santa Claus himself, proved that they had remembered every word.

The audience laughed and clapped and laughed again, especially when the curtain fell at the end and pinned a certain stout little elf, who was no other than Sunny Boy, half way in and half way out of the scenery.

"You were the best of all the elves," his Grandma Horton assured him as they rode home and he sat on her lap in the car. "I wouldn't have missed that play for a barrel of apples."

"What day is to-morrow, Sunny Boy?" asked Grandma Horton, leaning over the seat to tickle his grandson.

"Christmas!" chuckled Sunny Boy. "Do you suppose Santa Claus got my

letter? He never answered it, or anything."

"My patience!" cried Grandpa Horton so quickly Sunny Boy jumped. "You didn't expect an answer? Why, 'round Christmas time Santa Claus is so busy packing his sleigh, he doesn't have time to stop and eat his meals. Mrs. Santa Claus has to bring his breakfast and dinner and supper on a tray to him, and he eats standing up. Answer your letter! Well, I never!"

"I forgot he was so busy," apologized Sunny Boy. "I s'pose he has to go shopping, too."

"Look in your stocking to-morrow morning," Sunny Boy's mother advised him. "You'll be able to guess whether Santa Claus received your letter or not by the things he brings you."

Before it was light the next morning, Sunny Boy crept out of bed and down-

stairs into the parlor. He promptly fell over something, something hard with sharp edges. It was a red sled!

"Santa Claus did get the letter!" he bubbled joyously to Mother, who came down to see that he had on his shoes and stockings and his warm, blue woolly bathrobe.

There was no doubt about it. That letter must have gone straight to "S. Claus" and been carried in one hand while he selected the gifts asked for with the other. The lead soldiers were there, and a little searchlight; the ice skates were in a box, double-runner ones just right for a "beginning boy," Sunny said, and on the pretty Christmas tree in the corner hung popcorn and candy canes and everything that was lovely to look at and good to eat.

"Do you like it, Mother?" asked Sunny Boy when the gifts were all unwrapped

and Mrs. Horton had seen her blue and white tile.

"The sweetest present I ever had, precious," she declared, hugging him tightly.

Mr. Horton said his paper weight was worth its weight in gold, and as for Harriet she nearly squeezed the breath out of Sunny Boy because she was so delighted with her shopping bag.

Grandpa and Grandma Horton were equally pleased with their gifts. They stayed over New Year's and there was plenty of snow for good coasting all through the holidays. Sunny Boy was very busy the rest of the winter, too, and —but there, we mustn't tell you! If you are interested, you may read what happened to him next in another book called "SUNNY BOY AND HIS PLAYMATES."

THE END

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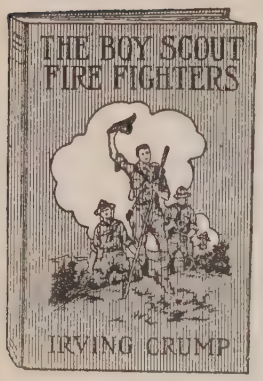

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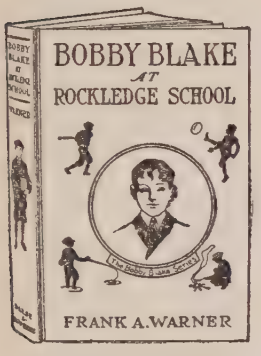

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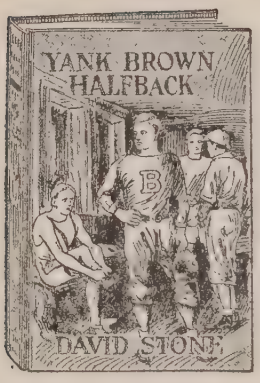

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